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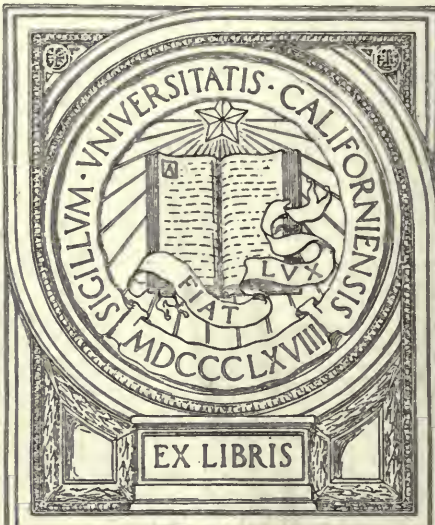

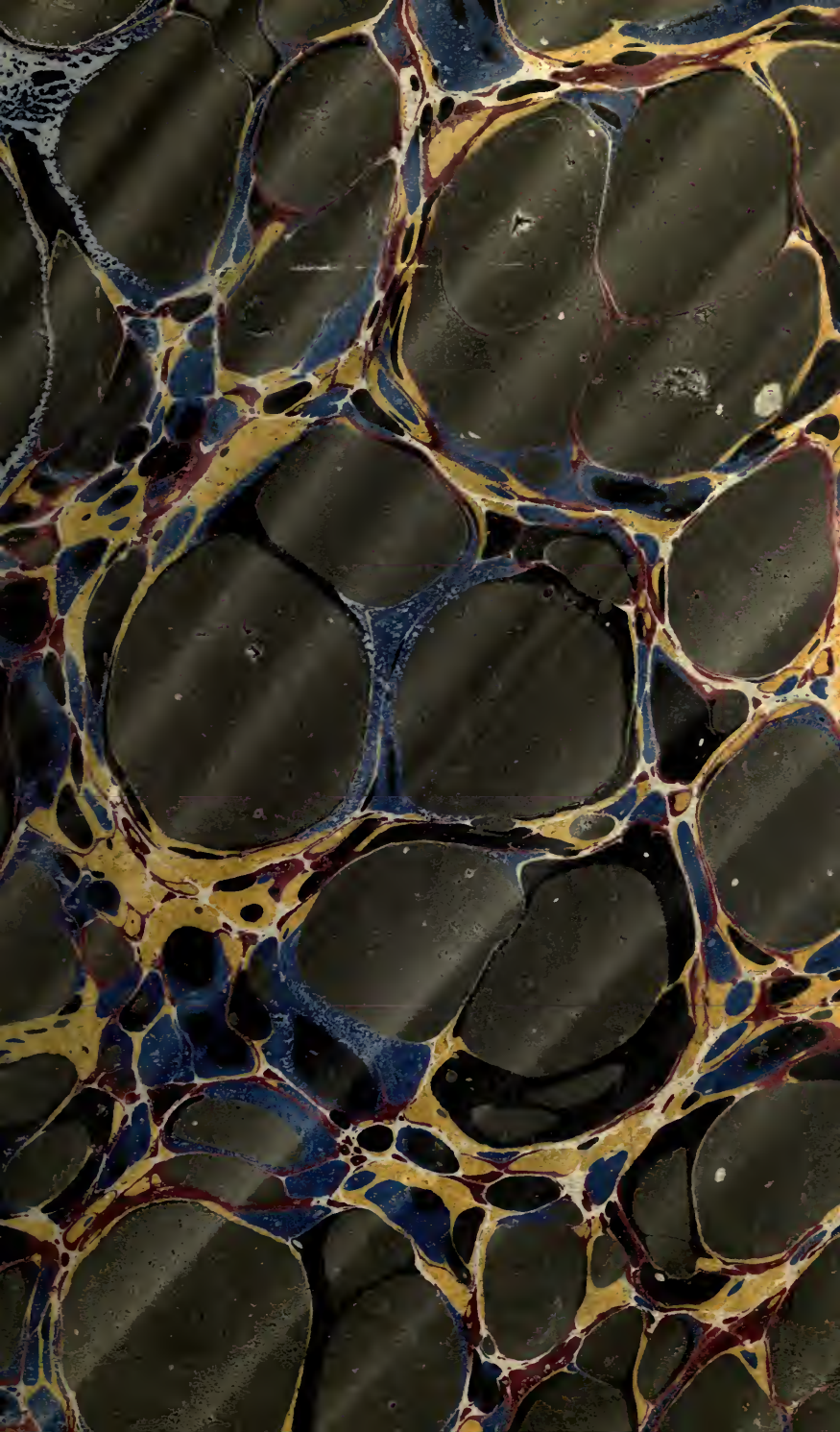

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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REV. JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF DOWN, CONNOR, AND DROMORE.

VOLUME VIII.

CONTAINING

A DISCOURSE OF THE LIBERTY OF PROPHESYING, AND THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF REPENTANCE.

THE

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OF THE

RIGHT REV. JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF DOWN, CONNOR, AND DROMORE:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE

RIGHT REV. REGINALD HEBER, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

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SECTION IV.

Of the Difficulty of expounding Scripture.

1. These considerations are taken from the nature of Scripture itself; but then, if we consider that we have no certain ways of determining places of difficulty and question, infallibly and certainly, but that we must hope to be saved in the belief of things plain, necessary, and fundamental, and our pious endeavour to find out God's meaning in such places, which he hath left under a cloud for other great ends reserved to his own knowledge, we shall see a very great necessity in allowing a liberty in prophesying, without prescribing authoritatively to other men's consciences, and becoming lords and masters of their faith. Now the means of expounding Scripture are either external or internal. For the external, as church authority, tradition, fathers, councils, and decrees of bishops,—they are of a distinct consideration, and follow after in their order. But here we will first consider the invalidity and uncertainty of all those means of expounding Scripture; which are more proper and internal to the nature of the thing. The great masters of commentaries, some whereof have undertaken to know all mysteries, have propounded many ways to expound Scripture, which indeed are excellent helps, but not infallible assistances, both because themselves are but moral instruments, which force not truth 'ex abscondito,' as also because they are not infallibly used and applied. 1. Sometime the sense is drawn forth by

the context and connexion of parts: it is well, when it can be so. But when there are two or three antecedents, and subjects spoken of, what man or what rule shall ascertain me, that I make my reference true by drawing the relation to such an antecedent; to which I have a mind to apply it, another hath not? For in a contexture, where one part does not always depend upon another, where things of differing natures intervene and interrupt the first intentions, there it is not always very probable to expound Scripture, and take its meaning by its proportion to the neighbouring words. But who desires satisfaction in this, may read the observation verified in St. Gregory's[a] morals upon Job; and the instances he there brings, are excellent proof, that this way of interpretation does not warrant any man to impose his expositions upon the belief and understanding of other men too confidently and magisterially.

2. Secondly: another great pretence or medium, is the conference of places, which Illyricus calls "ingens remedium et felicissimam expositionem Sanctæ Scripturæ;" and indeed so it is, if well and temperately used; but then we are beholden to them that do so; for there is no rule that can constrain them to it; for comparing of places is of so indefinite capacity, that if there be ambiguity of words, variety of sense, alteration of circumstances, or difference of style amongst divine writers, then there is nothing that may be more abused by wilful people, or may more easily deceive the unwary, or that may more amuse the most intelligent observer. The anabaptists take advantage enough in this proceeding;—and indeed so may any one that list; and when we pretend against them the necessity of baptizing all, by authority of "nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu," they have a parallel for it, and tell us, that Christ will "baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and that one place expounds the other; and because by fire is not meant an element, or any thing that is natural, but an allegory and figurative expression of the same thing; so also by water may be meant the figure signifying the effect or manner of operation of the Holy Spirit. Fire in one place, and water in the other, do but represent to us that Christ's baptism is nothing else but the cleansing and purifying us by the Holy

[a] Lib. v. c. 22.

Ghost. But that which I here note, as of greatest concernment, and which in all reason ought to be an utter overthrow to this topic, is a universal abuse of it among those that use it most; and when two places seem to have the same expression, or if a word have a double signification,—because in this place it may have such a sense, therefore it must; because in one of the places the sense is to their purpose, they conclude that therefore it must be so in the other too. An instance I give in the great question between the Socinians and the Catholics. If any place be urged in which our blessed Saviour is called God, they shew you two or three where the word God is taken in a depressed sense, for a 'quasi-Deus,' as when God said to Moses, 'Constitui te Deum Pharaonis;' and hence they argue, because I can shew the word is used for a 'Deus factus,' therefore no argument is sufficient to prove Christ to be 'Deus verus' from the appellative of 'Deus.' And might not another argue to the exact contrary, and as well urge that Moses is 'Deus verus,' because in some places the word 'Deus' is used 'pro Deo æterno:' both ways the argument concludes impiously and unreasonably. It is a fallacy 'a posse ad esse affirmativè;' because breaking of bread is sometimes used for a eucharistical manducation in Scripture; therefore I shall not, from any testimony of Scripture affirming the first Christians to have broken bread together, conclude that they lived hospitably and in common society. Because it may possibly be eluded, therefore it does not signify any thing. And this is the great way of answering all the arguments that can be brought against any thing, that any man hath a mind to defend; and any man that reads any controversies of any side, shall find as many instances of this vanity almost as he finds arguments from Scripture; this fault was of old noted by St. Austin, for then they had got the trick, and he is angry at it; "neque enim putare debemus esse præscriptum, ut quod in aliquo loco res aliqua per similitudinem significaverit, hoc etiam semper significare credamus."[b]

3. Thirdly: oftentimes Scriptures are pretended to be expounded by a proportion and analogy of reason. And this is as the other; if it be well, it is well. But unless there were some 'intellectus universalis' furnished with infallible

[b] De Doctrin. Christian. lib. iii.

propositions, by referring to which every man might argue infallibly, this logic may deceive as well as any of the rest. For it is with reason as with men's tastes; although there are some general principles, which are reasonable to all men, yet every man is not able to draw out all its consequences, nor to understand them when they are drawn forth, nor to believe when he does understand them. There is a precept of St. Paul directed to the Thessalonians before they were gathered into a body of a church, "To withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly."[c] But if this precept were now observed, I would fain know whether we should not fall into that inconvenience, which St. Paul sought to avoid in giving the same commandment to the Church of Corinth; "I wrote to you that ye should not company with fornicators;" and "yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then ye must go out of the world."[d] And therefore, he restrains it to a quitting the society of Christians living ill lives. But now, that all the world hath been Christians, if we should sin in keeping company with vicious Christians, must we not also go out of this world? Is not the precept made null, because the reason is altered, and things are come about, and that the οἱ πολλοὶ are 'the brethren,' ἀδελφοὶ ὀνομαζόμενοι,—'called brethren,' as St. Paul's phrase is? And yet either this never was considered, or not yet believed; for it is generally taken to be obligatory, though, I think, seldom practised. But when we come to expound scriptures to a certain sense by arguments drawn from prudential motives, then we are in a vast plain without any sufficient guide, and we shall have so many senses, as there are human prudences. But that which goes further than this, is a parity of reason from a plain place of Scripture to an obscure, from that which is plainly set down in a text to another that is more remote from it. And thus is that place in St. Matthew forced, "If thy brother refuse to to be amended, 'dic ecclesiæ.'" Hence, some of the Roman doctors argue, if Christ commands to 'tell the Church' in case of adultery or private injury, then much more in case of heresy. Well, suppose this to be a good interpretation: why must I stay here? why may I not also add, by a parity of reason, if the Church must be told of heresy, much more of treason: and why may

[c] 2 Thess. iii. 6. [d] 1 Cor. v. 9.

not I reduce all sins to the cognizance of a church tribunal, as some men do directly, and Snecanus does heartily and plainly? If a man's principles be good, and his deductions certain, he need not care whither they carry him: but, when an authority is intrusted to a person, and the extent of his power expressed in his commission, it will not be safety to meddle beyond his commission upon confidence of a parity of reason. To instance once more: when Christ in 'pasce oves, et tu es Petrus,' gave power to the pope to govern the Church (for to that sense the Church of Rome expounds those authorities), by a certain consequence of reason, say they, he gave all things necessary for exercise of this jurisdiction; and, therefore, in 'pasce oves' he gave him an indirect power over temporals, for that is necessary that he may do his duty: well, having gone thus far, we will go further upon the parity of reason; therefore he hath given the pope the gifts of tongues, and he hath given him power to give it; for how else shall Xavier convert the Indians? he hath given him power also to command the seas and the winds, that they should obey him, for this also is very necessary in some cases. And so 'pasce oves' is 'accipe donum linguarum,' and 'impera ventis, et dispone regum diademata, et laicorum prædia,' and 'influentias cœli' too, and whatsoever the parity of reason will judge equally necessary in order to 'pasce oves.' When a man does speak reason, it is but reason he should be heard; but though he may have the good fortune, or the great abilities, to do it, yet he hath not a certainty, no regular infallible assistance, no inspiration of arguments and deductions; and if he had, yet because it must be reason that must judge of reason, unless other men's understandings were of the same air, the same constitution and ability, they cannot be prescribed unto by another man's reason; especially because such reasonings as usually are in explication of particular places of Scripture, depend upon minute circumstances and particularities, in which it is so easy to be deceived, and so hard to speak reason regularly and always, that it is the greater wonder we be not deceived.

4. Fourthly: others pretend to expound Scripture by the analogy of faith, and that is the most sure and infallible way, as it is thought: but, upon stricter survey, it is but a chimera, a thing 'in nubibus,' which varies like the right hand and left hand of a pillar, and, at the best, is but like the coast of

a country to a traveller out of his way; it may bring him to his journey's end, though twenty miles about; it may keep him from running into the sea, and from mistaking a river for dry land; but whether this little path or the other be the right way, it tells not. So is the analogy of faith, that is, if I understand it right, the rule of faith, that is, the creed. Now, were it not a fine device to go to expound all the Scripture by the creed, there being in it so many thousand places which have no more relation to any article in the creed than they have to 'Tityre, tu patulæ?' Indeed, if a man resolves to keep the analogy of faith, that is, to expound Scripture, so as not to do any violence to any fundamental article, he shall be sure, however he errs, yet not to destroy faith; he shall not perish in his exposition. And that was the precept given by St. Paul, that all prophesyings should be estimated κατ' ἀναλογίαν πίστεως;[e] and to this very purpose St. Austin, in his exposition of Genesis, by way of preface, sets down the articles of faith, with this design and protestation of it, that if he says nothing against those articles, though he miss the particular sense of the place, there is no danger or sin in his exposition; but how that analogy of faith should have any other influence in expounding such places, in which those articles of faith are neither expressed nor involved, I understand not. But, then, if you extend the analogy of faith further than that, which is proper to the rule or symbol of faith, then every man expounds Scripture 'according to the analogy of faith;' but what? his own faith: which faith, if it be questioned, I am no more bound to expound according to the analogy of another man's faith, than he to expound according to the analogy of mine. And this is it that is complained of on all sides, that overvalue their own opinions. Scripture seems so clearly to speak what they believe, that they wonder all the world does not see it as clear as they do: but they satisfy themselves with saying that it is because they come with prejudice; whereas, if they had the true belief, that is, theirs, they would easily see what they see. And this is very true: for if they did believe as others believe, they would expound scriptures to their sense; but if this be expounding according to the analogy of faith, it signifies no more than this, 'Be you of my mind, and then my arguments will seem concluding, and my authorities and allegations pressing and

[e] Rom. vi. 12.

pertinent:' and this will serve on all sides, and, therefore, will do but little service to the determination of questions, or prescribing to other men's consciences on any side.

5. Lastly: consulting the originals is thought a great matter to interpretation of scriptures. But this is to small purpose: for, indeed, it will expound the Hebrew and the Greek, and rectify translations. But I know no man that says that the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek are easy and certain to be understood, and that they are hard in Latin and English: the difficulty is in the thing, however it be expressed; the least is in the language. If the original languages were our mother-tongue, Scripture is not much the easier to us; and a natural Greek or a Jew can, with no more reason or authority, obtrude his interpretations upon other men's consciences than a man of another nation. Add to this, that the inspection of the original is no more certain way of interpretation of Scripture now than it was to the fathers and primitive ages of the Church; and yet he that observes what infinite variety of translations were in the first ages of the Church (as St. Jerome observes), and never a one like another, will think that we shall differ as much in our interpretations as they did, and that the medium is as uncertain to us as it was to them; and so it is: witness the great number of late translations, and the infinite number of commentaries, which are too pregnant an argument, that we neither agree in the understanding of the words nor of the sense.

6. The truth is, all these ways of interpreting of Scripture, which of themselves are good helps, are made, either by design or by our infirmities, ways of intricating and involving scriptures in greater difficulty; because men do not learn their doctrines from Scripture, but come to the understanding of Scripture with preconceptions and ideas of doctrines of their own; and then no wonder that scriptures look like pictures, wherein every man in the room believes they look on him only, and that wheresoever he stands, or how often soever he changes his station. So that now what was intended for a remedy, becomes the promoter of our disease, and our meat becomes the matter of sickness: and the mischief is, the wit of man cannot find a remedy for it; for there is no rule, no limit, no certain principle, by which all men may be guided to a certain and so infallible an interpretation,

that he can, with any equity, prescribe to others to believe his interpretations in places of controversy or ambiguity. A man would think that the memorable prophecy of Jacob, that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh come," should have been so clear a determination of the time of the Messias, that a Jew should never have doubted it to have been verified in Jesus of Nazareth; and yet for this so clear vaticination, they have no less than twenty-six answers. St. Paul and St. James seem to speak a little diversely concerning justification by faith and works, and yet, to my understanding, it is very easy to reconcile them: but all men are not of my mind: for Osiander, in his confutation of the book which Melancthon wrote against him, observes, that there are twenty several opinions concerning justification, all drawn from the Scriptures, by the men only of the Augustine confession. There are sixteen several opinions concerning original sin, and as many definitions of the sacraments as there are sects of men that disagree about them.

7. And, now, what help is there for us in the midst of these uncertainties? If we follow any one translation, or any one man's commentary, what rule shall we have to choose the right by? or is there any one man that hath translated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? No translation challenges such a prerogative to be authentic, but the Vulgar Latin; and yet see with what good success: for when it was declared authentic by the Council of Trent, Sixtus put forth a copy much mended of what it was, and tied all men to follow it: but that did not satisfy; for Pope Clement revives and corrects it in many places, and still the decree remains in a changed subject. And, secondly, that translation will be very unapt to satisfy in which one of their own men, Isidore Clarius, a monk of Brescia, found and mended eight thousand faults, besides innumerable others which he says he pretermitted. And, then, thirdly, to shew how little themselves were satisfied with it, divers learned men among them did new translate the Bible, and thought they did God and the Church good service in it. So that if you take this for your precedent, you are sure to be mistaken infinitely: if you take any other, the authors themselves do not promise you any security: if you resolve to follow any one, as far only as you see cause, then you only do wrong or right by chance; for you have certainty just proportionable to your own skill,

to your own infallibility. If you resolve to follow any one, whithersoever he leads, we shall oftentimes come thither, where we shall see ourselves become ridiculous; as it happened in the case of Spiridion, bishop of Cyprus, who so resolved to follow his old book, that when an eloquent bishop who was desired to preach, read his text, "Tu autem tolle *cubile* tuum, et ambula;" Spiridion was very angry with him, because in *his* book it was "tolle *lectum* tuum," and thought it arrogance in the preacher to speak better Latin than his translator had done: and if it be thus in translations, it is far worse in expositions: "Quia scilicet Scripturam Sacram pro ipsa sui altitudine non uno eodemque sensu omnes accipiunt, ut pene quot homines, tot illic sententiæ erui posse videantur," said Vincentius Lirinensis.[f] In which every man knows what innumerable ways there are of being mistaken,—God having in things not simply necessary left such a difficulty upon those parts of Scripture which are the subject-matters of controversy, "ad edomandam labore superbiam, et intellectum a fastidio revocandum," as St. Austin gives a reason;[g] that all that err honestly, are therefore to be pitied and tolerated, because it is or may be the condition of every man, at one time or other.

8. The sum is this: since Holy Scripture is the repository of Divine truths, and the great rule of faith, to which all sects of Christians do appeal for probation of their several opinions; and since all agree in the articles of the creed as things clearly and plainly set down, and as containing all that which is of simple and prime necessity; and since, on the other side, there are in Scripture many other mysteries, and matters of question, upon which there is a veil; since there are so many copies with infinite varieties of reading; since a various interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent, may much alter the sense; since some places have divers literal senses, many have spiritual, mystical, and allegorical meanings; since there are so many tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties and improprieties of language, whose understanding depends upon such circumstances, that it is almost impossible to know its proper interpretation, now that the knowledge of such circumstances and particular stories is irrevocably lost: since there are some

[f] In Commonit. [g] Lib. ii. de Doctr. Christian. c. 6.

mysteries which, at the best advantage of expression, are not easy to be apprehended, and whose explication, by reason of our imperfections, must needs be dark, sometimes weak, sometimes unintelligible: and, lastly, since those ordinary means of expounding Scripture, as searching the originals, conference of places, parity of reason, and analogy of faith, are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible,—he that is the wisest, and by consequence the likeliest to expound truest in all probability of reason, will be very far from confidence; because every one of these, and many more, are like so many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depressing our certainty of finding out truth in such mysteries, and amidst so many difficulties. And therefore a wise man, that considers this, would not willingly be prescribed to by others; and therefore, if he also be a just man, he will not impose upon others; for it is best every man should be left in that liberty, from which no man can justly take him, unless he could secure him from error: so that here also there is a necessity to conserve the liberty of prophesying, and interpreting Scripture; a necessity derived from the consideration of the difficulty of Scripture in questions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium of interpretation.

SECTION V.

Of the Insufficiency and Uncertainty of Tradition to expound Scripture, or determine Questions.

1. In the next place, we must consider those extrinsical means of interpreting Scripture, and determining questions, which they most of all confide in, that restrain prophesying with the greatest tyranny. The first and principal is tradition, which is pretended not only to expound Scripture ("Necesse enim est propter tantos tam varii erroris anfractus, ut propheticæ et apostolicæ interpretationis linea secundum ecclesiastici et catholici sensus normam dirigatur:"[h]) but also to propound articles upon a distinct stock; such articles, whereof there is no mention and proposition in Scripture. And in this topic, not only the distinct articles

[h] Vincent. Lirinens. in Commonitor.

are clear and plain, like as the fundamentals of faith expressed in Scripture, but also it pretends to expound Scripture, and to determine questions with so much clarity and certainty, as there shall neither be error nor doubt remaining, and, therefore, no disagreeing is here to be endured. And, indeed, it is most true, if tradition can perform these pretensions, and teach us plainly, and assure us of all truths, which they require us to believe, we can in this case have no reason to disbelieve them, and, therefore, are certainly heretics if we do, because, without a crime, without some human interest or collateral design, we cannot disbelieve traditive doctrine or traditive interpretation, if it be infallibly proved to us that tradition is an infallible guide.

2. But here I first consider that tradition is no repository of articles of faith, and, therefore, the not following it is no argument of heresy; for, besides that I have shewed Scripture in its plain expresses to be an abundant rule of faith and manners, tradition is a topic as fallible as any other: so fallible, that it cannot be sufficient evidence to any man in a matter of faith or question of heresy.

3. For, first, I find that the fathers were infinitely deceived in their account and enumeration of traditions: sometimes they did call some traditions such, not which they knew to be so, but by arguments and presumptions they concluded them so. Such as was that of St. Austin, "Ea quæ universalis tenet ecclesia nec à conciliis instituta reperiuntur, credibile est ab apostolorum traditione descendisse."[i] Now suppose this rule probable, that is the most, yet it is not certain; it might come by custom, whose original was not known, but yet could not derive from an apostolical principle. Now when they conclude of particular traditions by a general rule, and that general rule not certain, but, at the most, probable in any thing, and certainly false in some things,—is it wonder if the productions, that is, their judgments and pretence, fail so often? And if I should but instance in all the particulars, in which tradition was pretended falsely or uncertainly in the first ages, I should multiply them to a troublesome variety; for it was then accounted so glorious a thing to have spoken with the persons of the apostles, that if any man could with any colour pretend to it,

[i] Epist. 118. ad Januar. De Bapt. contr. Donat. lib. iv. c. 24.

he might abuse the whole Church, and obtrude what he listed under the specious title of apostolical tradition; and it is very notorious to every man, that will but read and observe the Recognitions or Stromata of Clemens Alexandrinus,—where there is enough of such false wares shewed in every book, and pretended to be no less than from the apostles. In the first age after the apostles, Papias pretended he received a tradition from the apostles, that Christ, before the day of judgment, should reign a thousand years upon earth, and his saints with him, in temporal felicities; and this thing proceeding from so great an authority as the testimony of Papias, drew after it all or most of the Christians in the first three hundred years. For, besides that the millenary opinion is expressly taught by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Lactantius, Severus, Victorinus, Apollinaris, Nepos, and divers others famous in their time; Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue against Tryphon, says, it was the belief of all Christians exactly orthodox, *καὶ εἰ τινές εἰσι κατὰ πάντα ὀρθογνώμονες χριστιανοί*; and yet there was no such tradition, but a mistake in Papias; but I find it nowhere spoke against, till Dionysius of Alexandria confuted Nepo's book, and converted Coracion the Egyptian from the opinion. Now if a tradition, whose beginning of being called so began with a scholar of the apostles (for so was Papias), and then continued for some ages upon the mere authority of so famous a man, did yet deceive the Church: much more fallible is the pretence, when, two or three hundred years after, it but commences, and then by some learned man is first called a tradition apostolical. And so it happened in the case of the Arian heresy, which the Nicene fathers did confute by objecting a contrary tradition apostolical, as Theodoret reports;[k] and yet if they had not had better arguments from Scripture than from tradition, they would have failed much in so good a cause; for this very pretence the Arians themselves made, and desired to be tried by the fathers of the first three hundred years, which was a confutation sufficient to them who pretended a clear tradition, because it was unimaginable, that the tradition should leap so as not to come from the first to the last by the middle. But that this trial was sometime declined by that excellent

[k] Lib. i. Hist. c. 8.

man, St. Athanasius, although at other times confidently and truly pretended, it was an argument the tradition was not so clear, but both sides might with some fairness pretend to it.[l] And, therefore, one of the prime founders of their heresy, the heretic Artemon,[m]—having observed the advantage might be taken by any sect that would pretend tradition, because the medium was plausible, and consisting of so many particulars, that it was hard to be redargued,—pretended a tradition from the apostles, that Christ was ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος, and that the tradition did descend by a constant succession in the Church of Rome to Pope Victor's time inclusively, and till Zephyrinus had interrupted the series and corrupted the doctrine; which pretence, if it had not had some appearance of truth, so as possibly to abuse the Church, had not been worthy of confutation, which yet was with care undertaken by an old writer, out of whom Eusebius transcribes a large passage to reprove the vanity of the pretender.[n] But I observe from hence, that it was usual to pretend to tradition, and that it was easier pretended than confuted, and I doubt not but oftener done than discovered. A great question arose in Africa concerning the baptism of heretics, whether it were valid or no. St. Cyprian and his party appealed to Scripture; Stephen, bishop of Rome, and his party, would be judged by custom and tradition ecclesiastical. See how much the nearer the question was to a determination, either that probation was not accounted by St. Cyprian, and the bishops both of Asia and Africa, to be a good argument, and sufficient to determine them, or there was no certain tradition against them; for unless one of these two do it, nothing could excuse them from opposing a known truth, unless, peradventure, St. Cyprian, Firmilian, the bishops of Galatia, Cappadocia, and almost two parts of the world, were ignorant of such a tradition, for they knew of none such, and some of them expressly denied it. And the sixth general synod approves of the canon[o] made in the Council of Carthage under Cyprian upon this very ground, because in "prædictorum præsulum

[l] Vide Petav. in Epiph. her. 69.

[m] Καὶ γὰρ εἰσί τινες, ὦ φίλοι, ἔλεγον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους ὁμολογοῦντες αὐτὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι, ἄνθρωπον δὲ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἀποφαινόμενοι, οἷς οὐ συντίθεμαι, οὐδὲ ἂν πλεῖστοι ταῦτά μοι δοξάσαντες ἔπολεν.—*Justin. Mart.* Dial. ad Tryph. Jud.

[n] Euseb. lib. v. c. ult.

[o] Can. 2.

locis et solum secundum traditam eis consuetudinem servatus est;" they had a particular tradition for rebaptization, and, therefore, there could be no tradition universal against it; or, if there were, they knew not of it, but much for the contrary: and then it would be remembered, that a concealed tradition was like a silent thunder, or a law not promulgated; it neither was known, nor was obligatory. And I shall observe this too, that this very tradition was so obscure, and was so obscurely delivered, silently proclaimed, that St. Austin, who disputed against the Donatists upon this very question, was not able to prove it but by a consequence which he thought probable and credible, as appears in his discourse against the Donatists. "The apostles," saith St. Austin,[p] "prescribed nothing in this particular: but this custom, which is contrary to Cyprian, ought to be believed to have come from their tradition, as many other things which the catholic Church observes." That is all the ground and all the reason; nay, the Church did waver concerning that question, and before the decision of a council, Cyprian and others might dissent without breach of charity.[q] It was plain, then, there was no clear tradition in the question; possibly there might be a custom in some churches postnate to the times of the apostles, but nothing that was obligatory, no tradition apostolical. But this was a suppletory device ready at hand whenever they needed it; and St. Austin confuted the Pelagians, in the question of original sin, by the custom of exorcism and insufflation,[r] which St. Austin said, came from the apostles by tradition; which yet was then, and is now, so impossible to be proved, that he that shall affirm it, shall gain only the reputation of a bold man and a confident.

4. Secondly, I consider, if the report of traditions in the primitive times, so near the ages apostolical, was so uncertain, that they were fain to aim at them by conjectures, and grope as in the dark, the uncertainty is much increased since; because there are many famous writers, whose works are lost, which yet if they had continued, they might have been good records to us, as Clemens Romanus, Hegesippus, Nepos, Coracion, Dionysius Areopagite, of Alexandria, of

[p] Lib. v. de Baptism. contr. Donat. c. 23. [q] Lib. i. de Baptism. c. 18.
[r] De Peccat. Original. lib. ii. c. 40. contra Pelagi. et Cælest.

Corinth, Firmilian, and many more: and since we see pretences have been made without reason in those ages, where they might better have been confuted, than now they can,—it is greater prudence to suspect any later pretences, since so many sects have been, so many wars, so many corruptions in authors, so many authors lost, so much ignorance hath intervened, and so many interests have been served, that now the rule is to be altered: and whereas it was of old time credible, that that was apostolical whose beginning they knew not,—now quite contrary, we cannot safely believe them to be apostolical, unless we do know their beginning to have been from the apostles. For this consisting of probabilities and particulars, which, put together, make up a moral demonstration,—the argument which I now urge,—hath been growing these fifteen hundred years; and if anciently there was so much as to evacuate the authority of tradition,—much more is there now absolutely to destroy it, when all the particulars, which time and infinite variety of human accidents have been amassing together, are now concentred, and are united by way of constipation. Because every age, and every great change, and every heresy, and every interest, hath increased the difficulty of finding out true traditions.

5. Thirdly; there are very many traditions which are lost, and yet they are concerning matters of as great consequence as most of those questions for the determination whereof traditions are pretended: it is more than probable, that as in baptism and the eucharist the very forms of ministration are transmitted to us, so also in confirmation and ordination, and that there were special directions for visitation of the sick, and explicit interpretations of those difficult places of St. Paul, which St. Peter affirmed to be so difficult, that the ignorant do wrest them to their own damnation; and yet no church hath conserved these or those many more, which St. Basil affirms to be so many, that ἐπιλείψει ἡμέρα τὰ ἄγραφα τῆς ἐκκλησίας μυστήρια διηγούμενον·—'the day would fail him in the very simple enumeration of all traditions ecclesiastical.'[s] And if the Church hath failed in keeping the great variety of traditions, it will hardly be thought a fault in a private person to neglect tradition, which either the whole Church hath very much neglected

[s] Cap. xxix. de Spir. Sancto.

inculpably, or else the whole Church is very much to blame. And who can ascertain us, that she hath not entertained some which are no traditions, as well as lost thousands that are? That she did entertain some false traditions, I have already proved; but it is also as probable, that some of those which these ages did propound for traditions, are not so, as it is certain, that some which the first ages called traditions, were nothing less.

6. Fourthly; there are some opinions, which, when they began to be publicly received, began to be accounted prime traditions, and so became such, not by a native title, but by adoption; and nothing is more usual than for the fathers to colour their popular opinion with so great an appellative. St. Austin called the communicating of infants an apostolical tradition; and yet we do not practise it, because we disbelieve the allegation. And that every custom, which at first introduction was but a private fancy or singular practice, grew afterward into a public rite, and went for a tradition after awhile continuance, appears by Tertullian, who seems to justify it; "Non enim existimas tu licitum esse cuicunque fideli constituere quod Deo placere illi visum fuerit, ad disciplinam et salutem?" And again, "A quocunque traditore censetur, nec autorem respicias sed autoritatem."[t] And St. Jerome most plainly, "Præcepta majorum apostolicas traditiones quisque existimat." And when Irenæus had observed that great variety in the keeping of Lent, which yet to be a forty-days' fast is pretended to descend from tradition apostolical, some fasting but one day before Easter, some two, some forty, and this even long before Irenæus's time, he gives this reason; "Varietas illa jejunii cœpit apud majores nostros; qui non accuratè consuetudinem eorum, qui vel simplicitate quâdam vel privatâ autoritate in posterum aliquid statuissent, observârant;"[u] and there are yet some points of good concernment, which, if any man should question in a high manner, they would prove indeterminable by Scripture, or sufficient reason; and yet I doubt not their confident defenders would say, they are opinions of the Church, and quickly pretend a tradition from the very apostles, and believe themselves so secure, that they could

[t] Contra Marcion. de Coron. Milit. c. iii. iv. Apud. Euseb. lib. v. c. 24.
[u] Ex translatione Christophorsoni.

not be discovered, because the question never having been disputed gives them occasion to say, that which had no beginning known, was certainly from the apostles. For why should not divines do in the question of reconfirmation as in that of rebaptization? Are not the grounds equal from an indelible character in one as in the other? and if it happen such a question as this after contestation should be determined, not by any positive decree, but by the cession of one part, and the authority and reputation of the other, does not the next age stand fair to be abused with a pretence of tradition, in the matter of reconfirmation, which never yet came to a serious question? For so it was in the question of rebaptization, for which there was then no more evident tradition than there is now in the question of reconfirmation, as I proved formerly, but yet it was carried upon that title.

7. Fifthly: there is great variety in the probation of tradition, so that whatever is proved to be tradition, is not equally and alike credible; for nothing but universal tradition is of itself credible; other traditions in their just proportion, as they partake of the degrees of universality. Now that a tradition be universal, or, which is all one, that it be a credible testimony, St. Irenæus[x] requires that tradition should derive from all the churches apostolical. And therefore, according to this rule, there was no sufficient medium to determine the question about Easter, because the eastern and western churches had several traditions respectively, and both pretended from the apostles. Clemens Alexandrinus[y] says, it was a secret tradition from the apostles, that Christ preached but one year; but Irenæus says it did derive from heretics; and says, that he, by tradition, first from St. John, and then from his disciples, received another tradition, that Christ was almost fifty years old when he died, and so by consequence preached almost twenty years; both of them were deceived, and so had all that had believed the report of either, pretending tradition apostolical. Thus the custom, in the Latin Church, of fasting on Saturday, was against that tradition which the Greeks had from the

[x] Lib. iii. c. 4.

[y] Lib. i. Stromat.

[z] Lib. ii. c. 39. Omnes seniores testantur, qui in Asia apud Johannem, discipulum Domini, convenerunt, id ipsum tradidisse eis Johannem, &c. et qui alios apostolos viderunt, hæc eadem ab ipsis audierunt, et testantur de ejusmodi relatione.—*Salmeron.* disput. 51. in Rom.

apostles; and therefore, by this division and want of consent, which was the true tradition, was so absolutely indeterminable, that both must needs lose much of their reputation. But how then, when not only particular churches, but single persons, are all the proof we have for a tradition? And this often happened. I think St. Austin is the chief argument and authority we have for the assumption of the Virgin Mary: the baptism of infants is called a tradition by Origen alone at first, and from him by others. The procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, which is an article the Greek Church disavows, derives from the tradition apostolical, as it is pretended; and yet before St. Austin we hear nothing of it very clearly or certainly, forasmuch as that whole mystery concerning the blessed Spirit, was so little explicated in Scripture, and so little derived to them by tradition, that, till the Council of Nice, you shall hardly find any form of worship or personal address of devotion to the Holy Spirit, as Erasmus observes, and I think the contrary will very hardly be verified. And for this particular in which I instance, whatsoever is in Scripture concerning it, is against that which the Church of Rome calls tradition, which makes the Greeks so confident as they are of the point, and is an argument of the vanity of some things, which for no greater reason are called traditions, but because one man hath said so, and that they can be proved by no better argument to be true. Now in this case, wherein tradition descends upon us with unequal certainty, it would be very unequal to require of us an absolute belief of every thing not written, for fear we be accounted to slight tradition apostolical. And since nothing can require our supreme assent, but that which is truly catholic and apostolic, and to such a tradition is required, as Irenæus says, the consent of all those churches which the apostles planted, and where they did preside, this topic will be of so little use in judging heresies, that (beside what is deposited in Scripture) it cannot be proved in any thing but in the canon of Scripture itself, and as it is now received, even in that there is some variety.

8. And therefore, there is wholly a mistake in this business; for when the fathers appeal to tradition, and with much earnestness, and some clamour, they call upon heretics to conform to or to be tried by tradition, it is such a

tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Christianity, which were also recorded in Scripture. But because the canon was not yet perfectly consigned, they called to that testimony they had, which was the testimony of the churches apostolical, whose bishops and priests being the 'antistites religionis,' did believe and preach Christian religion, and conserve all its great mysteries according as they have been taught. Irenæus calls this a tradition apostolical, "Christum accepisse calicem, et dixisse sanguinem suum esse, et docuisse novam oblationem Novi Testamenti, quam ecclesia per apostolos accipiens offert per totum mundum." And the fathers, in these ages, confute heretics by ecclesiastical tradition; that is, they confront against their impious and blasphemous doctrines that religion, which the apostles having taught to the churches where they did preside, their successors did still preach, and, for a long while together, suffered not the enemy to sow tares amongst their wheat. And yet these doctrines, which they called traditions, were nothing but such fundamental truths which were in Scripture, πάντα σύμφωνα ταῖς γραφαίς, as Irenæus in Eusebius[a] observes, in the instance of Polycarpus: and it is manifest by considering what heresies they fought against, the heresies of Ebion, Cerinthus, Nicolaitans, Valentinians, Carpocratians,[b] persons that denied the Son of God, the unity of the Godhead, that preached impurity, that practised sorcery and witchcraft. And now that they did rather urge tradition against them than Scripture, was, because the public doctrine of all the apostolical churches was at first more known and famous than many parts of the Scripture, and because some heretics denied St. Luke's Gospel, some receive none but St. Matthew's, some rejected all St. Paul's epistles, and it was a long time before the whole canon was consigned by universal testimony, some churches having one part, some another, Rome herself had not all; so that, in this case, the argument from tradition was the most famous, the most certain, and the most prudent. And now, according to this rule, they had more traditions than we have, and traditions did by degrees lessen as they came to be written; and their necessity was less, as the knowledge of them was ascertained to us by a better keeper of Divine truths. All that great

[a] Lib. v. c. 20.

[b] Vide Irenæ. lib. iii, et iv. cont. Hæres.

mysteriousness of Christ's priesthood, the unity of his sacrifice, Christ's advocation and intercession for us in heaven, and many other excellent doctrines, might very well be accounted traditions before St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was published to all the world; but now they are written truths, and if they had not, possibly we might either have lost them quite, or doubted of them, as we do of many other traditions, by reason of the insufficiency of the propounder. And therefore it was, that St. Peter took order that the Gospel should be writ: for he had promised that he would do something, which, after his decease, should have these things in remembrance.[c] He knew it was not safe trusting the report of men, where the fountain might quickly run dry, or be corrupted so insensibly, that no cure could be found for it, nor any just notice taken of it till it were incurable. And, indeed, there is scarce any thing but what is written in Scripture, that can, with any confidence of argument, pretend to derive from the apostles, except rituals, and manners of ministration; but no doctrines or speculative mysteries are so transmitted to us by so clear a current, that we may see a visible channel, and trace it to the primitive fountains. It is said to be a tradition apostolical, that no priest should baptize without chrism and the command of the bishop: suppose it were, yet we cannot be obliged to believe it with much confidence, because we have but little proof for it, scarce any thing but the single testimony of St. Jerome.[d] And yet, if it were, this is but a ritual, of which, in passing by, I shall give that account: That, suppose this and many more rituals did derive clearly from tradition apostolical, — which yet but very few do, — yet it is hard that any church should be charged with crime for not observing such rituals, because we see some of them which certainly did derive from the apostles, are expired and gone out in a desuetude; such as are abstinence from blood and from things strangled; — the cœnobitic life of secular persons, — the college of widows, — to worship standing, upon the Lord's day, — to give milk and honey to the newly baptized, — and many more of the like nature; now there having been no mark to distinguish the necessity of one from the indifference of the other, they are all alike necessary, or alike

[c] 2 Pet. i. 13. [d] Dialog. adv. Lucifer.

indifferent; if the former, why does no church observe them? If the latter, why does the Church of Rome charge upon others the shame of novelty, for leaving of some rites and ceremonies, which, by her own practice, we are taught to have no obligation in them, but the adiaphorous? St. Paul gave order, that "a bishop should be the husband of one wife;" the Church of Rome will not allow so much; other churches allow more: the apostles commanded Christians to fast on Wednesday and Friday, as appears in their canons; the Church of Rome fasts Friday and Saturday, and not on Wednesday: the apostles had their agapæ, or love-feasts; we should believe them scandalous: they used a kiss of charity in ordinary addresses; the Church of Rome keeps it only in their mass, other churches quite omit it: the apostles permitted priests and deacons to live in conjugal society, as appears in the fifth canon of the Apostles (which to them is an argument who believe them such), and yet the Church of Rome by no means will endure it; nay, more, Michael Medina[e] gives testimony, that of eighty-four canons apostolical which Clemens collected, scarce six or eight are observed by the Latin Church; and Peresius gives this account of it; "In illis contineri multa, quæ temporum corruptione non plenè observantur, aliis pro temporis et materiæ qualitate aut obliteratis, aut totius ecclesiæ magisterio abrogatis." Now it were good that they, which take a liberty to themselves, should also allow the same to others. So that, for one thing or other, all traditions, excepting those very few that are absolutely universal, will lose all their obligation, and become no competent medium to confine men's practices, or limit their faiths, or determine their persuasions. Either for the difficulty of their being proved, the incompetence of the testimony that transmits them, or the indifference of the thing transmitted, all traditions, both ritual and doctrinal, are disabled from determining our consciences either to a necessary believing or obeying.

9. Sixthly: to which I add, by way of confirmation, that there are some things called traditions, and are offered to be proved to us by a testimony, which is either false or not extant. Clemens of Alexandria pretended it a tradition, that

[e] De Sacr. Hom. Continent. lib. v. c. 105. De Tradit. part. iii. c. de Author. Can. Apost.

the apostles preached to them that died in infidelity, even after their death, and then raised them to life; but he proved it only by the testimony of the book of Hermes; he affirmed it to be a tradition apostolical, that the Greeks were saved by their philosophy; but he had no other authority for it but the apocryphal books of Peter and Paul. Tertullian and St. Basil pretended it an apostolical tradition, to sign in the air with the sign of the cross; but this was only consigned to them in the Gospel of Nicodemus. But to instance, once for all, in the Epistle of Marcellus to the bishop of Antioch, where he affirms that it is the canon of the Apostles, "præter sententiam Romani pontificis nod posse concilia celebrari." And yet there is no such canon extant, nor ever was, for aught appears in any record we have; and yet the collection of the canons is so entire, that though it hath something more than what was apostolical, yet it hath nothing less. And now that I am casually fallen upon an instance from the canons of the Apostles, I consider that there cannot in the world a greater instance be given, how easy it is to be abused in the believing of traditions. For, 1. to the first fifty, which many did admit for apostolical, thirty-five more were added, which most men now count spurious, all men call dubious, and some of them universally condemned by peremptory sentence, even by them who are greatest admirers of that collection, as sixty-fifth, sixty-seventh, and eighty-fourth and fifth canons. For the first fifty, it is evident that there are some things so mixed with them, and no mark of difference left, that the credit of all is much impaired; insomuch that Isidore of Seville says, "they were apocryphal, made by heretics, and published under the title Apostolical, but neither the fathers nor the Church of Rome did give assent to them."[f] And yet they have prevailed so far amongst some, that Damascen is of opinion they should be received equally with the canonical writings of the apostles.[g] One thing only I observe (and we shall find it true in most writings, whose authority is urged in questions of theology), that the authority of the tradition is not it which moves the assent, but the nature of the thing; and because such a canon is delivered, they do not therefore believe the sanction or proposition so delivered, but disbelieve the tradition, if they do not like the

[f] Apud Gratian. dist. 16. c. Canones. [g] Lib. i. c. 18. de Orthod. Fide.

matter; and so do not judge of the matter by the tradition, but of the tradition by the matter. And thus the Church of Rome rejects the eighty-fourth or eighty-fifth canon of the Apostles, not because it is delivered with less authority than the last thirty-five are, but because it reckons the canon of Scripture otherwise than it is at Rome. Thus also the fifth canon amongst the first fifty, because it approves the marriage of priests and deacons, does not persuade them to approve of it too, but itself becomes suspected for approving it: so that either they accuse themselves of palpable contempt of the apostolical authority, or else that the reputation of such traditions is kept up to serve their own ends, and therefore, when they encounter them, they are no more to be upheld; which what else is it but to teach all the world to contemn such pretences, and undervalue traditions, and to supply to others a reason why they should do that which, to them that give the occasion, is most unreasonable?

10. Seventhly; The testimony of the ancient Church being the only means of proving tradition, and sometimes their dictates and doctrine being the tradition pretended of necessity to be imitated, it is considerable that men, in their estimate of it, take their rise from several ages and differing testimonies, and are not agreed about the competency of their testimony; and the reasons that on each side make them differ, are such as make the authority itself the less authentic and more repudiable. Some will allow only of the three first ages, as being most pure, most persecuted, and therefore most holy, least interested, serving fewer designs, having fewest factions, and therefore more likely to speak the truth for God's sake and its own, as best complying with their great end of acquiring heaven in recompense of losing their lives: others say,[h] that those ages, being persecuted, minded the present doctrines proportionable to their purposes and constitution of the ages, and make little or nothing of those questions which at this day vex Christendom: and both speak true: the first ages speak greatest truth, but least pertinently. The next ages, the ages of the four general councils, spake something, not much more pertinently to the present questions, but were not so likely to speak true, by reason of their dispositions contrary to the capacity and circumstance

[h] Vide Car. Perron. Lettre au Sieur Casaubon.

of the first ages ; and if they speak wisely as doctors, yet not certainly as witnesses of such propositions which the first ages noted not, and yet, unless they had noted, could not possibly be traditions. And therefore, either of them will be useless as to our present affairs. For indeed the questions, which now are the public trouble, were not considered or thought upon for many hundred years, and therefore prime tradition there is none as to our purpose, and it will be an insufficient medium to be used or pretended in the determination ; and to dispute concerning the truth or necessity of traditions, in the questions of our times, is as if historians, disputing about a question in the English story, should fall on wrangling whether Livy or Plutarch were the best writers : and the earnest disputes about traditions are to no better purpose. For no church at this day admits the one half of those things, which certainly by the fathers were called traditions apostolical, and no testimony of ancient writers does consign the one half of the present questions, to be or not to be traditions. So that they who admit only the doctrine and testimony of the first ages, cannot be determined in most of their doubts which now trouble us, because their writings are of matters wholly differing from the present disputes; and they which would bring in after-ages to the authority of a competent judge or witness, say the same thing ; for they plainly confess that the first ages spake little or nothing to the present question, or at least nothing to their sense of them ; for therefore they call in aid from the following ages, and make them suppletory and auxiliary to their designs, and therefore are no traditions to our purposes. And they who would willingly have it otherwise, yet have taken no course it should be otherwise; for when they had opportunity, in the councils of the last ages, to determine what they had a mind to, yet they never named the number, nor expressed the particular traditions which they would fain have the world believe to be apostolical : but they have kept the bridle in their own hands, and made a reserve of their own power, that, if need be, they may make new pretensions, or not be put to it to justify the old by the engagement of a conciliar declaration.

11. Lastly ; We are acquitted, by the testimony of the primitive fathers, from any other necessity of believing, than of

such articles as are recorded in Scripture: and this is done by them, whose authority is pretended the greatest argument for tradition, as appears largely in Irenæus,[1] who disputes professedly for the sufficiency of Scripture against certain heretics, who affirm some necessary truths not to be written. It was an excellent saying of St. Basil, and will never be wiped out with all the eloquence of Perron in his sermon "de Fide." "Manifestus est fidei lapsus, et liquidum superbiæ vitium, vel respuere aliquid eorum quæ Scriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod scriptum non est." And it is but a poor device to say that every particular tradition is consigned in Scripture by those places, which give authority to tradition; and so the introducing of tradition is not a superinducing any thing over or besides Scripture, because tradition is like a messenger, and the Scripture is like his letters of credence, and therefore authorizes whatsoever tradition speaketh. For supposing Scripture does consign the authority of tradition (which it might do, before all the whole instrument of Scripture itself was consigned, and then afterward there might be no need of tradition), yet supposing it, it will follow that all those traditions which are truly prime and apostolical, are to be entertained according to the intention of the deliverers, which indeed is so reasonable of itself, that we need not Scripture to persuade us to it;—itself is authentic as Scripture is, if it derives from the same fountain; and a word is never the more the word of God for being written, nor the less for not being written; but it will not follow that whatsoever is pretended to be tradition, is so, neither is the credit of the particular instances consigned in Scripture; 'et dolosus versatur in generalibus,' but that this craft is too palpable. And if a general and indefinite consignation of tradition be sufficient to warrant every particular that pretends to be tradition, then St. Basil had spoken to no purpose, by saying, it is pride and apostasy from the faith, to bring in what is not written: for if either any man brings in what is written, or what he says is delivered, then the first being express Scripture, and the second being consigned in Scripture, no man can be charged with superinducing what is not written, he hath his answer ready; and then these are zealous words absolutely to no purpose; but if such general

[1] Lib. iii. c. 2. contr. Hæres.

consignation does not warrant every thing that pretends to tradition, but such only as are truly proved to be apostolical; then Scripture is useless as to this particular; for such tradition gives testimony to Scripture, and therefore is of itself first, and more credible, for it is credible of itself; and therefore, unless St. Basil thought that all the will of God in matters of faith and doctrine were written, I see not what end, nor what sense, he could have in these words: for no man in the world, except enthusiasts and madmen, ever obtruded a doctrine upon the Church, but he pretended Scripture for it, or tradition; and, therefore, no man could be pressed by these words, no man confuted, no man instructed, no, not enthusiasts or Montanists. For suppose either of them should say, that since in Scripture, the Holy Ghost is promised to abide with the Church for ever,—to teach whatever they pretend the Spirit in any age hath taught them, is not to superinduce any thing beyond what is written, because the truth of the Spirit, his veracity, and his perpetual teaching, being promised and attested in Scripture, Scripture hath just so consigned all such revelations, as (Perron saith) it hath all such traditions. But I will trouble myself no more with arguments from any human authorities; but he that is surprised with the belief of such authorities, and will but consider the very many testimonies of antiquity to this purpose, as of Constantine,[k] St. Jerome,[l] St. Austin,[m] St. Athanasius,[n] St. Hilary,[o] St. Epiphanius,[p] and divers others, all speaking words to the same sense, with that saying of St. Paul,[q] "Nemo sentiat super quod scriptum est," will see that there is reason, that since no man is materially a heretic, but that he errs in a point of faith, and all faith is sufficiently recorded in Scripture, the judgment of faith, and heresy is to be derived from thence, and no man is to be condemned for dissenting in an article, for whose probation tradition only is pretended; only according to the degree of its evidence, let every one determine himself; but of this evidence we must not judge for others: for unless it be in things of faith, and absolute certainties, evidence is a word of relation, and so supposes two terms, the object and the faculty; and it is

[k] Orat. ad Nicen. pp. Apud Theodor. lib. i. c. 7.
[l] In Matt. lib. iv. c. 23. et in Aggæum.
[m] De Bono Viduel. c. i.
[n] Orat. cont. Gent.
[o] In Psalm cxxxii.
[p] Lib. ii. contra hæres. tom. i. Hær. 61.
[q] 1 Cor. iv.

an imperfect speech to say a thing is evident in itself (unless we speak of first principles, or clearest revelations); for that may be evident to one, that is not so to another, by reason of the pregnancy of some apprehensions, and the immaturity of others.

This discourse hath its intention in traditions doctrinal and ritual, that is, such traditions which propose articles new 'in materiâ;' but now if Scripture be the repository of all Divine truths sufficient for us, tradition must be considered as its instrument, to convey its great mysteriousness to our understandings: it is said there are traditive interpretations, as well as traditive propositions, but these have not much distinct consideration in them, both because their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former considerations; as also because, in very deed, there are no such things as traditive interpretations universal: for as for particulars, they signify no more but that they are not sufficient determinations of questions theological; therefore, because they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more argument than the particular authority of these men whose commentaries they are, and therefore must be considered with them.

12. The sum is this: since the fathers, who are the best witnesses of traditions, yet were infinitely deceived in their account; since sometimes they guessed at them, and conjectured by way of rule and discourse, and not of their knowledge, not by evidence of the thing; since many are called traditions which were not so, many are uncertain whether they were or no, yet confidently pretended, and this uncertainty, which at first was great enough, is increased by infinite causes and accidents in the succession of sixteen hundred years; since the Church hath been either so careless or so abused, that she could not or would not preserve tradition with carefulness and truth; since it was ordinary for the old writers to set out their own fancies, and the rites of their church, which had been ancient, under the specious title of apostolical traditions; since some traditions rely but upon single testimony at first, and yet, descending upon others, come to be attested by many, whose testimony, though conjunct, yet in value is but single, because it relies upon the first single relator, and so can have no greater authority, or

certainty, than they derive from the single person; since the first ages, who were most competent to consign tradition, yet did consign such traditions as be of a nature wholly discrepant from the present questions, and speak nothing at all, or very imperfectly, to our purposes; and the following ages are no fit witnesses of that which was not transmitted to them, because they could not know it at all, but by such transmission and prior consignation; since what at first was a tradition, came afterward to be written, and so ceased its being a tradition; yet the credit of traditions commenced upon the certainty and reputation of those truths first delivered by word, afterward consigned by writing; since what was certainly tradition apostolical, as many rituals were, are rejected by the Church in several ages, and are gone out into a desuetude; and, lastly, since, besides the no necessity of traditions, there being abundantly enough in Scripture, there are many things called traditions by the fathers, which they themselves either proved by no authors, or by apocryphal, and spurious, and heretical,—the matter of tradition will in very much be so uncertain, so false, so suspicious, so contradictory, so improbable, so unproved, that if a question be contested, and be offered to be proved only by tradition, it will be very hard to impose such a proposition to the belief of all men with an imperiousness or resolved determination; but it will be necessary men should preserve the liberty of believing, and prophesying, and not part with it, upon a worse merchandise and exchange than Esau made for his birthright.

SECTION VI.

Of the Uncertainty and Insufficiency of Councils Ecclesiastical to the same Purpose.

1. But since we are all this while in uncertainty, it is necessary that we should address ourselves somewhere, where we may rest the sole of our foot: and nature, Scripture, and experience, teach the world, in matters of question, to submit to some final sentence. For it is not reason that controversies should continue, till the erring person shall be willing to condemn himself; and the Spirit of God hath directed us by

that great precedent at Jerusalem, to address ourselves to the Church, that in a plenary council and assembly, she may synodically determine controversies. So that if a general council have determined a question, or expounded Scripture, we may no more disbelieve the decree than the Spirit of God himself who speaks in them. And, indeed, if all assemblies of bishops were like that first, and all bishops were of the same spirit of which the apostles were, I should obey their decree with the same religion as I do them whose preface was "Visum est Spiritui Sancto et nobis;" and I doubt not but our blessed Saviour intended that the assemblies of the Church should be judges of the controversies, and guides of our persuasions in matters of difficulty. But he also intended they should proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and those precedents which he had made authentic by the immediate assistance of his Holy Spirit: he hath done his part, but we do not do ours. And if any private person in the simplicity and purity of his soul desires to find out a truth of which he is in search and inquisition, if he prays for wisdom, we have a promise he shall be heard and answered liberally; and, therefore, much more, when the representatives of the catholic Church do meet; because every person there hath 'in individuo' a title to the promise, and another title as he is a governor and a guide of souls, and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, especially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with simplicity and purity; so that there is no disputing against the pretence, and promises, and authority, of general councils. For if any one man can hope to be guided by God's Spirit in the search, the pious, and impartial, and unprejudicate search of truth, then much more may a general council. If no private man can hope for it, then truth is not necessary to be found, nor we are not obliged to search for it, or else we are saved by chance: but if private men can, by virtue of a promise upon certain conditions, be assured of finding out sufficient truth, much more shall a general council. So that I consider thus: there are many promises pretended to belong to general assemblies in the Church; but I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they shall be absolutely assisted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: faith is a virtue as well

as charity, and, therefore, consists in liberty and choice, and hath nothing in it of necessity. There is no question but that they are obliged to proceed according to some rule; for they expect no assistance by way of enthusiasm; if they should, I know no warrant for that, neither did any general council ever offer a decree which they did not think sufficiently proved by Scripture, reason, or tradition, as appears in the acts of the councils. Now, then, if they be tied to conditions, it is their duty to observe them; but whether it be certain that they will observe them, that they will do all their duty, that they will not sin even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that is the consideration. So that if any man questions the title and authority of general councils, and whether or no great promises appertain to them, I suppose him to be much mistaken: but he also that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reason, and that none of them were deceived, because possibly they might have been truly directed,—is a stranger to the history of the Church, and to the perpetual instances and experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous saying of St. Gregory, that he had the four first councils in esteem and veneration next to the four evangelists. I suppose it was because he did believe them to have proceeded according to rule, and to have judged righteous judgment; but why had not he the same opinion of other councils too, which were celebrated before his death (for he lived after the fifth general)? not because they had not the same authority; for that which is warrant for one, is warrant for all; but because he was not so confident that they did their duty, nor proceeded so without interest, as the first four had done, and the following councils did never get that reputation, which all the catholic Church acknowledged due to the first four. And in the next order were the three following generals; for the Greeks and Latins did never jointly acknowledge but seven generals to have been authentic in any sense because they were in no sense agreed that any more than seven had proceeded regularly and done their duty. So that now the question is not whether general councils have a promise that the Holy Ghost will assist them; for every private man hath that promise, that if he does his duty, he shall be assisted sufficiently in order to that end to

which he needs assistance; and, therefore, much more shall general councils, in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need assistance, that is, in order to the conservation of the faith, for the doctrinal rules of good life, and all that concerns the essential duty of a Christian, but not in deciding questions to satisfy contentious, or curious, or presumptuous spirits. But now can the bishops so convened be factious,—can they be abused with prejudice, or transported with interests,—can they resist the Holy Ghost,—can they extinguish the Spirit,—can they stop their ears, and serve themselves upon the Holy Spirit and the pretence of his assistances; and cease to serve them upon themselves, by captivating their understandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it necessary they should perform any condition? Is there any one duty for them to perform in these assemblies, a duty which they have power to do or not to do? If so, then they may fail of it, and not do their duty: and if the assistance of the Holy Spirit be conditional, then we have no more assurance that they are assisted than that they do their duty, and do not sin.

2. Now let us suppose what this duty is: certainly, 'if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, must come to it by such means which are spiritual and holy dispositions, in order to a holy and spiritual end. They must be 'shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,' that is, they must have peaceable and docible dispositions, nothing with them that is violent and resolute to encounter those gentle and sweet assistances: and the rule they are to follow is the rule which the Holy Spirit hath consigned to the catholic Church, that is, the Holy Scripture, either entirely,[r] or at least for the greater part of the rule: so that now if the bishops be factious and prepossessed with persuasions depending upon interest, it is certain they may judge amiss; and if they recede from the rule, it is certain they do judge amiss: and this I say upon their grounds who most advance the authority of general councils: for if a general council may err if a pope confirm it not, then most certainly if in any thing it recede from Scripture, it does also err; because that they are to expect the pope's confirmation they

[r] Vide Optat. Milev. lib. v. adv. Parm. Baldvin. in eundem; et S. August. in ps. 21. Expos. 2.

offer to prove from Scripture: now if the pope's confirmation be required by authority of Scripture, and that, therefore, the defailance of it does evacuate the authority of the council, then also are the councils' decrees invalid, if they recede from any other part of Scripture: so that Scripture is the rule they are to follow, and a man would have thought it had been needless to have proved it, but that we are fallen into ages in which no truth is certain, no reason concluding, nor is there any thing that can convince some men. For Stapleton,[s] with extreme boldness against the piety of Christendom, against the public sense of the ancient Church, and the practice of all pious assemblies of bishops, affirms the decrees of a council to be binding, "Etiamsi non confirmetur ne probabili testimonio Scripturarum;" nay, though it be quite 'extra Scripturam;' but all wise and good men have ever said that sense which St. Hilary expressed in these words, 'Quæ extra evangelium sunt, non defendam;" this was it which the good Emperor Constantine propounded to the fathers met at Nice; "Libri Evangelici, oracula apostolorum, et veterum prophetarum clare nos instruunt quid sentiendum in divinis."[t] And this is confessed by a sober man of the Roman Church itself, the cardinal of Cusa; "Oportet quod omnia talia quæ legere debent, contineantur in autoritatibus sacrarum Scripturarum."[u] Now, then, all the advantage I shall take from hence is this, that if the apostles commended them who examined their sermons by their conformity to the law and the prophets, and the men of Berea were accounted "noble for searching the Scriptures, whether those things which they taught, were so, or no;" I suppose it will not be denied, but the councils' decrees may also be tried whether they be conform to Scripture, yea or no; and although no man can take cognizance and judge the decrees of a council 'pro autoritate publica,' yet 'pro informatione privata,' they may; the authority of a council is not greater than the authority of the apostles, nor their dictates more sacred or authentic. Now then, put case a council should recede from Scripture; whether or no were we bound to believe its decrees? I only ask the question: for it were hard to be bound to believe what to our understanding seems contrary to that

[s] Relect. Controv. iv. q. 1. a. 3.
[t] Lib. ii. ad. Constant. Apud Theod. lib. i. c. 7.
[u] Concord. Cathol. lib. ii. c. 10.

which we know to be the word of God: but if we may lawfully recede from the council's decrees, in case they be contrariant to Scripture, it is all that I require in this question. For if they be tied to a rule, then they are to be examined and understood according to the rule, and then we are to give ourselves that liberty of judgment which is requisite to distinguish us from beasts, and to put us into a capacity of reasonable people, following reasonable guides. But however, if it be certain that the councils are to follow Scripture, then if it be notorious that they do recede from Scripture, we are sure we must obey God rather than men, and then we are well enough. For unless we are bound to shut our eyes, and not to look upon the sun, if we may give ourselves liberty to believe what seems most plain, and unless the authority of a council be so great a prejudice as to make us to do violence to our understanding, so as not to disbelieve the decree, because it seems contrary to Scripture, but to believe it agrees with Scripture, though we know not how, therefore because the council hath decreed it,—unless, I say, we be bound in duty to be so obediently blind and sottish, we are sure that there are some councils which are pretended general, that have retired from the public notorious words and sense of Scripture. For what wit of man can reconcile the decree of the thirteenth session of the Council of Constance with Scripture, in which session the half communion was decreed, in defiance of Scripture, and with a 'non obstante' to Christ's institution. For in the preface of the decree, Christ's institution and the practice of the Primitive Church are expressed, and then, with a 'non obstante,' communion in one kind is established. Now then suppose the 'non obstante' in the form of words relates to the primitive practice, yet since Christ's institution was taken notice of in the first words of the decree, and the decree made quite contrary to it, let the 'non obstante' relate whither it will, the decree (not to call it a defiance) is a plain recession from the institution of Christ, and therefore the 'non obstante' will refer to that without any sensible error; and, indeed, for all the excuses to the contrary, the decree was not so discreetly framed, but that, in the very form of words, the defiance and the 'non obstante' are too plainly relative to the first words. For what sense can there else be in the first 'licet;' "*licet* Christus in utraque

specie," and "*licet* ecclesia primitiva," etc. "tamen hoc non obstante," &c. the first 'licet' being a relative term, as well as the second 'licet,' must be bounded with some correspondent. But it matters not much; let them whom it concerns, enjoy the benefit of all excuses they can imagine, it is certain Christ's institution and the council's sanction are as contrary as light and darkness. Is it possible for any man to contrive a way to make the decree of the Council of Trent, commanding the public offices of the Church to be in Latin, friends with the fourteenth chapter of the Corinthians? It is not amiss to observe how the hyperaspists of that council sweat to answer the allegations of St. Paul; and the wisest of them do it so extremely poor, that it proclaims to all the world that the strongest man that is, cannot eat iron, or swallow a rock. Now, then, would it not be an unspeakable tyranny to all wise persons (who as much hate to have their souls enslaved as their bodies imprisoned), to command them to believe, that these decrees are agreeable to the word of God? Upon whose understanding soever these are imposed, they may at the next session reconcile them to a crime, and make any sin sacred, or persuade him to believe propositions contradictory to a mathematical demonstration. All the arguments in the world, that can be brought to prove the infallibility of councils, cannot make it so certain that they are infallible, as these two instances do prove infallibly that these were deceived; and if ever we may safely make use of our reason, and consider whether councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reason be more assured, that they have or have not, than we have in these particulars: so that, either our reason is of no manner of use, in the discussion of this question, and the thing itself is not at all to be disputed, or if it be, we are certain that these actually were deceived, and we must never hope for a clearer evidence in any dispute. And if these be, others might have been, if they did as these did, that is, depart from their rule. And it was wisely said of Cusanus, "Notandum est experimento rerum universale concilium posse deficere:"[x] The experience of it is notorious, that councils have erred: and all the arguments against experience are but plain sophistry.

3. And therefore I make no scruple to slight the decrees

[x] Lib. ii. c. 14. Concord. Cathol.

of such councils, wherein the proceedings were as prejudicate and unreasonable, as in the council wherein Abailardus was condemned, where the presidents having pronounced 'Damnamus,' they at the lower end being awaked at the noise, heard the latter part of it, and concurred as far as *Mnamus* went, and that was as good as D*amnamus;* for if they had been awake at the pronouncing the whole word, they would have given sentence accordingly. But by this means St. Bernard numbered the major part of voices against his adversary Abailardus:[y] and as far as these men did do their duty, the duty of priests, and judges, and wise men, so we may presume them to be assisted, but no further. But I am content this (because but a private assembly) shall pass for no instance: but what shall we say of all the Arian councils, celebrated with so great fancy, and such numerous assemblies? we all say that they erred. And it will not be sufficient to say they were not lawful councils: for they were convened by that authority which all the world knows did at that time convocate councils, and by which (as it is[z] confessed and is notorious) the first eight generals did meet, that is, by the authority of the emperor all were called, and as many and more did come to them, than came to the most famous Council of Nice: so that the councils were lawful, and if they did not proceed lawfully, and therefore did err, this is to say, that councils are then not deceived, when they do their duty, when they judge impartially, when they decline interest, when they follow their rule; but this says also, that it is not infallibly certain that they will do so; for these did not, and therefore the others may be deceived as well as these were. But another thing is in the wind; for councils not confirmed by the pope, have no warrant that they shall not err, and they, not being confirmed, therefore failed. But whether is the pope's confirmation after the decree or before? It cannot be supposed before; for there is nothing to be confirmed, till the decree be made, and the article composed. But if it be after, then possibly the pope's decree may be requisite in solemnity of law, and to make the authority popular, public, and human; but the decree is true or false before the pope's confirmation, and is not at all altered by the supervening decree, which being postnate to the decree, alters not what

[y] Epist. Abailardi ad Heliss. conjugem. [z] Cusanus, lib. ii. cap. 25. Concord.

went before: "Nunquam enim crescit ex postfacto præteriti æstimatio," is the voice both of law and reason. So that it cannot make it divine, and necessary to be heartily believed. It may make it lawful, not make it true; that is, it may possibly by such means become a law, but not a truth. I speak now upon supposition the pope's confirmation were necessary, and required to the making of conciliar and necessary sanctions. But if it were, the case were very hard: for suppose a heresy should invade and possess the chair of Rome, what remedy can the Church have in that case, if a general council be of no authority, without the pope confirm it? Will the pope confirm a council against himself? will he condemn his own heresy? That the pope may be a heretic appears in the canon law,[a] which says he may for heresy be deposed, and therefore by a council, which in this case hath plenary authority without the pope. And therefore in the synod at Rome held under Pope Adrian the Second, the censure of the synod against Honorius, who was convict of heresy, is approved with this appendix, that in this case, the case of heresy, "minores possint de majoribus judicare:" and therefore if a pope were above a council, yet when the question is concerning heresy, the case is altered; the pope may be judged by his inferiors, who in this case, which is the main case of all, become his superiors. And it is little better than impudence to pretend, that all councils were confirmed by the pope, or that there is a necessity in respect of Divine obligation, that any should be confirmed by him, more than by another of the patriarchs. For the Council of Chalcedon itself, one of those four which St. Gregory did revere next to the four evangelists, is rejected by Pope Leo, who, in his fifty-third epistle to Anatolius, and in his fifty-fourth to Martian, and in his fifty-fifth to Pulcheria, accuses it of ambition and inconsiderate temerity, and therefore no fit assembly for the habitation of the Holy Spirit; and Galasius, in his tome "de Vinculo Anathematis," affirms, that the council is in part to be received, in part to be rejected, and compares it to heretical books of a mixed matter, and proves his assertion by the place of St. Paul, "Omnia probate, quod bonum est retinete."—And Bellarmine says the same: "In Concilio Chalcedonensi quædam sunt bona, quædam mala, quædam

[a] Dist. 40. Can. si Papa.

recipienda, quædam rejicienda; ita et in libris hæreticorum,"[b] and if any thing be false, then all is questionable, and judicable, and discernible, and not infallible antecedently. And however that council hath 'ex postfacto,' and by the voluntary consenting of after-ages obtained great reputation; yet they that lived immediately after it, that observed all the circumstances of the thing, and the disabilities of the persons, and the uncertainty of the truth of its decrees, by reason of the unconcludingness of the arguments brought to attest it, were of another mind, "Quod autem ad Concilium Chalcedonense attinet, illud id temporis (viz. Anastasii Imp.) neque palam in ecclesiis sanctissimis prædicatum fuit, neque ab omnibus rejectum; nam singuli ecclesiarum præsides pro suo arbitratu in ea re egerunt."[c] And so did all men in the world that were not mastered with prejudices, and undone in their understanding with accidental impertinences; they judged upon those grounds which they had and saw, and suffered not themselves to be bound to the imperious dictates of other men, who are as uncertain in their determinations as others in their questions. And it is an evidence that there is some deception and notable error, either in the thing or in the manner of their proceeding, when the decrees of a council shall have no authority from the compilers, nor no strength from the reasonableness of the decision, but from the accidental approbation of posterity: and if posterity had pleased, Origen had believed well and been an orthodox person. And it was pretty sport to see that Papias was right for two ages together, and wrong ever since; and just so it was in councils, particularly in this of Chalcedon, that had a fate alterable according to the age, and according to the climate, which, to my understanding, is nothing else but an argument that the business of infallibility is a latter device, and commenced to serve such ends as cannot be justified by true and substantial grounds; and that the pope should confirm it as of necessity, is a fit cover for the same dish.

4. In the sixth general council, Honorius, pope of Rome, was condemned: did that council stay for the pope's confirmation before they sent forth the decree? Certainly they did not think it so needful, as that they would have suspended or cassated the decree, in case the pope had then

[b] De Laicis, lib. iii. c. 20. sect. ad hoc ult. [c] Evag. lib. iii. cap. 30.

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disavowed it: for, besides the condemnation of Pope Honorius for heresy, the thirteenth and fifty-fifth canons of that council are expressly against the custom of the Church of Rome. But this particular is involved in that new question, whether the pope be above a council. Now since the contestation of this question, there was never any free or lawful council that determined for the pope, it is not likely any should; and is it likely that any pope will confirm a council that does not? For the Council of Basil is therefore condemned by the last Lateran, which was an assembly in the pope's own palace, and the Council of Constance is of no value in this question, and slighted in a just proportion, as that article is disbelieved.[d] But I will not much trouble the question with a long consideration of this particular; the pretence is senseless and illiterate, against reason and experience, and already determined by St. Austin sufficiently as to this particular, "Ecce putamus illos episcopos, qui Romæ judicaverunt, non bonos judices fuisse. Restabat adhuc plenarium ecclesiæ universæ concilium, ubi etiam cum ipsis judicibus causa possit agitari, ut si male judicasse convicti essent, eorum sententiæ solverentur."[e] For since popes may be parties, may be simoniacs, schismatics, heretics, it is against reason that in their own causes they should be judges, or that in any causes they should be superior to their judges. And as it is against reason, so it is against all experience too; for the Council Sinuessanum (as it is said) was convened to take cognizance of Pope Marcellinus; and divers councils were held at Rome to give judgment in causes of Damasus, Sixtus III., Symmachus, and Leo III. and IV., as is to be seen in Platina, and the tomes of the councils. And it is no answer to this and the like allegations, to say, in matters of fact and human constitution, the pope may be judged by a council; but, in matters of faith, all the world must stand to the pope's determination and authoritative decision: for if the pope can by any colour pretend to any thing, it is to a supreme judicature in matters ecclesiastical, positive, and of fact; and if he fails in this pretence, he will hardly hold up his head for any thing else: for the ancient bishops derived their faith from the fountain,

[d] Vide postea de Concil. Sinuessano. sect. vi. n. 9.

[e] Epist. 162. ad Glorium.

and held that in the highest tenure, even from Christ their head; but by reason of the imperial[f] city it became the principal seat, and he surprised the highest judicature, partly by the concession of others, partly by his own accidental advantages; and yet even in these things, although he was 'major singulis,' yet he was 'minor universis.' And this is no more than what was decreed of the eighth general synod;[g] which, if it be sense, is pertinent to this question: for general councils are appointed to take cognizance of questions and differences about the bishop of Rome, "non tamen audacter in eum ferre sententiam." By 'audacter,' as is supposed, is meant 'precipitanter,—hastily and unreasonably:' but if to give sentence against him be wholly forbidden, it is nonsense; for to what purpose is an authority of taking cognizance, if they have no power of giving sentence, unless it were to defer it to a superior judge, which in this case cannot be supposed? For either the pope himself is to judge his own cause after their examination of him, or the general council is to judge him. So that, although the council is by that decree enjoined to proceed modestly and warily, yet they may proceed to sentence, or else the decree is ridiculous and impertinent.

5. But to clear all, I will instance in matters of question and opinion: for not only some councils have made their decrees without or against the pope, but some councils have had the pope's confirmation, and yet have not been the more legitimate or obligatory, but are known to be heretical. For the canons of the sixth synod, although some of them were made against the popes and the custom of the Church of Rome, a pope awhile after did confirm the council; and yet the canons are impious and heretical, and so esteemed by the Church of Rome herself. I instance in the second canon, which approves of that synod of Carthage under Cyprian for rebaptization of heretics, and the seventy-second canon, that dissolves marriage between persons of differing persuasion in matters of Christian religion; and yet these canons were approved by Pope Adrian I. who in his epistle to Tharasius, which is in the second action of the seventh synod, calls them "canones divinè et legaliter prædicatos." And these canons were used by Pope Nicolas I. in his epistle 'ad

[f] Vide Concil. Chalced. act. 15. [g] Act. ult. can. 21.

Michaelem,' and by Innocent III. '(c. a multis: extra. de ætat. ordinandorum.)' So that now (that we may apply this) there are seven general councils, which by the Church of Rome are condemned of error. The Council of Antioch,[h] A.D. 345, in which St. Athanasius was condemned: the Council of Milan, A.D. 354, of above three hundred bishops: the Council of Ariminum, consisting of six hundred bishops; the second Council of Ephesus, A.D. 449, in which the Eutychian heresy was confirmed, and the patriarch Flavianus killed by the faction of Dioscorus: the Council of Constantinople under Leo Isaurus, A.D. 730: and another at Constantinople thirty-five years after: and, lastly, the Council at Pisa, one hundred and thirty-four years since. Now that these general councils are condemned, is a sufficient argument that councils may err: and it is no answer to say they were not confirmed by the pope; for the pope's confirmation I have shewn not to be necessary; or if it were, yet even that also is an argument that general councils may become invalid, either by their own fault, or by some extrinsical supervening accident, either of which evacuates their authority. And whether all that is required to the legitimation of a council, was actually observed in any council, is so hard to determine, that no man can be infallibly sure, that such a council is authentic and sufficient probation.

6. Secondly; and that is the second thing I shall observe, There are so many questions concerning the efficient, the form, the matter of general councils, and their manner of proceeding, and their final sanction, that, after a question is determined by a conciliar assembly, there are perhaps twenty more questions to be disputed, before we can with confidence either believe the council upon its mere authority, or obtrude it upon others. And upon this ground, how easy it is to elude the pressure of an argument drawn from the authority of a general council, is very remarkable in the question about the pope's or the council's superiority: which question, although it be defined for the council against the pope by five general councils, the Councils of Florence, of Constance, of Basil, of Pisa, and one of the Laterans; yet

[h] Vid. Socr. lib. ii. c. 5. et Sozom. lib. iii. c. 5. Gregor. in Regist. lib. iii. caus. 7. ait Concilium Numidiæ errâsse. Concilium Aquisgrani erravit. De raptore et rapta dist. 20. can. de libellis. in glossa.

the Jesuits to this day account this question 'pro non definita,' and have rare pretences for their escape. As, first, it is true, a council is above a pope, in case there be no pope, or he uncertain; which is Bellarmine's answer, never considering whether he spake sense or no, nor yet remembering that the Council of Basil deposed Eugenius, who was a true pope, and so acknowledged.—Secondly: sometimes the pope did not confirm these councils: that is their answer. And although it was an exception that the fathers never thought of, when they were pressed with the authority of the Council of Ariminum, or Sirmium, or any other Arian convention; yet the Council of Basil was convened by Pope Martin V.; then, in his sixteenth session, declared by Eugenius IV. to be lawfully continued, and confirmed expressly in some of its decrees by Pope Nicolas, and so stood till it was at last rejected by Leo X. very many years after; but that came too late, and with too visible an interest: and this council did decree 'fide catholica tenendum concilium esse supra papam.' But if one pope confirms it, and another rejects it, as it happened in this case and in many more, does it not destroy the competeney of the authority? And we see it by this instance, that it so serves the turns of men, that it is good in some cases, that is, when it makes for them, and invalid when it makes against them.—Thirdly, but it is a little more ridiculous in the case of the Council of Constance, whose decrees were confirmed by Martin V. But that this may be no argument against them, Bellarmine tells you he only confirmed those things 'quæ facta fuerant conciliariter, re diligenter examinata:' of which there being no mark, nor any certain rule to judge it, it is a device that may evacuate any thing we have a mind to, it was not done 'conciliariter,' that is, not according to our mind; for 'conciliariter' is a fine new-nothing, that may signify what you please.—Fourthly, but other devices yet more pretty they have; as, whether the Council of Lateran was a general council or no, they know not (no, nor will not know,) which is a wise and plain reservation of their own advantages, to make it general or not general, as shall serve their turn.—Fifthly, as for the Council of Florence, they are not sure whether it hath defined the question 'satis aperte;' 'aperte' they will grant, if you will allow them not 'satis aperte.'—Sixthly and lastly, the Council

of Pisa is 'neque approbatum neque reprobatum:'[i] which is the greatest folly of all, and most prodigious vanity. So that by something or other, either they were not convened lawfully, or they did not proceed 'conciliariter,' or it is not certain that the council was general or no, or whether the council were 'approbatum' or 'reprobatum,' or else it is 'partim confirmatum, partim reprobatum,' or else it is 'neque approbatum neque reprobatum;' by one of these ways, or a device like to these, all councils and all decrees shall be made to signify nothing, and to have no authority.

7. Thirdly: there is no general council that hath determined that a general council is infallible; no scripture hath recorded it; no tradition universal hath transmitted to us any such proposition: so that we must receive the authority at a lower rate, and upon a less probability, than the things consigned by that authority. And it is strange that the decrees of councils should be esteemed authentic and infallible, and yet it is not infallibly certain that the councils themselves are infallible, because the belief of the councils' infallibility is not proved to us by any medium but such as may deceive us.

8. Fourthly: but the best instance that some councils are, and all may be, deceived, is the contradiction of one council to another: for in that case both cannot be true, and which of them is true, must belong to another judgment, which is less than the solemnity of a general council; and the determination of this matter can be of no greater certainty after it is concluded, than when it was propounded as a question, being it is to be determined by the same authority, or by a less than itself. But for this allegation we cannot want instances. The Council of Trent[k] allows picturing of God the Father: the Council of Nice[l] altogether disallows it. The same Nicene Council, which was the seventh general, allows of picturing Christ in the form of a lamb: but the sixth synod by no means will endure it, as Caranza affirms. The Council of Neocæsarea confirmed by Leo IV. 'dist. 20. de libellis,' and approved in the first Nicene Council, as it is said in the seventh session of the Council of Florence,[m] forbids second marriages, and imposes penances on them that are married the second time, forbidding priests to be present at such

[i] Bellar. de Conc. lib. i. c. 8.
[k] Sess. 25.
[l] Act. 2.
[m] Can. 82.

marriage-feasts: besides that this is expressly against the doctrine of St. Paul, it is also against the doctrine of the Council of Laodicea, which took off such penances, and pronounced second marriages to be free and lawful, Nothing is more discrepant than the third Council of Carthage and the Council of Laodicea about assignation of the canon of Scripture; and yet the sixth general synod approves both. And I would fain know if all general councils are of the same mind with the fathers of the Council of Carthage, who reckon into the canon five books of Solomon. I am sure St. Austin reckoned but three,[n] and I think all Christendom beside are of the same opinion. And if we look into the title of the law "de Conciliis," called 'concordantia discordantiarum,' we shall find instances enough to confirm that the decrees of some councils are contradictory to others, and that no wit can reconcile them. And whether they did or no, that they might disagree, and former councils be corrected by later, was the belief of the doctors in those ages, in which the best and most famous councils were convened; as appears in that famous saying of St. Austin: speaking concerning the rebaptizing of heretics, and how much the Africans were deceived in that question, he answers the allegation of the bishops' letters, and those national councils which confirmed St. Cyprian's opinion, by saying that they were no final determination. For 'Episcoporum literæ emendari possunt a conciliis nationalibus, concilia nationalia a plenariis, ipsaque plenaria priora a posterioribus emendari.'[o] Not only the occasion of the question, being a matter not of fact, but of faith, as being instanced in the question of rebaptization, but also the very fabric and economy of the words, put by all the answers of all those men, who think themselves pressed with the authority of St. Austin. For as national councils may correct the bishops' letters, and general councils may correct national, so the latter general may correct the former, that is, have contrary and better decrees of manner, and better determinations in matters of faith. And from hence hath risen a question, —whether is to be received, the former or the latter councils, in case they contradict each other? The former are nearer the fountains apostolical, the latter are of greater consideration: the first have more authority, the latter more reason: the first are more venerable, the latter more inquisitive and

[n] Lib. xvii. de Cul. Dei, c. 20. [o] Lib. ii. de Bapt. Donat. c. 3.

seeing. And now what rule shall we have to determine our beliefs, whether to authority, or reason, the reason and the authority both of them not being the highest in their kind, both of them being repudiable, and at most but probable? And here it is that this great uncertainty is such as not to determine any body, but fit to serve every body: and it is sport to see that Bellarmine[p] will by all means have the Council of Carthage preferred before the Council of Laodicea, because it is later; and yet he prefers the second Nicene Council[q] before the Council of Frankfort, because it is elder. St. Austin would have the former generals to be mended by the later; but Isidore in Gratian says, when councils do differ, 'standum esse antiquioribus,—the elder must carry it.' And indeed these probables are buskins to serve every foot, and they are like 'magnum et parvum,' they have nothing of their own, all that they have is in comparison of others: so these topics have nothing of resolute and dogmatical truth, but in relation to such ends as an interested person hath a mind to serve upon them.

9. Fifthly: there are many councils corrupted, and many pretended and alleged when there were no such things; both which make the topic of the authority of councils to be little and inconsiderable. There is a council brought to light in the edition of Councils by Binius, viz. Sinnessanum, pretended to be kept in the year three hundred and three, but it was so private till then, that we find no mention of it in any ancient record: neither Eusebius, nor Ruffinus, St. Jerome, nor Socrates, Sozomen, nor Theodoret, nor Eutropius, nor Bede, knew any thing of it; and the eldest allegation of it is by Pope Nicolas I. in the ninth century. And he that shall consider, that three hundred bishops, in the midst of horrid persecutions (for so then they were), are pretended to have convened, will need no greater argument to suspect the imposture. Besides, he that was the framer of the engine, did not lay his ends together handsomely; for it is said, that the deposition of Marcellinus by the synod was told to Diocletian when he was in the Persian war; when, as it is known before that time he had returned to Rome, and triumphed for his Persian conquest, as Eusebius in his Chronicle reports: and this is so plain, that Binius and Baronius pretended the

[p] Lib. ii. de Conc. c. 8. Sect. respondeo imprimis.

[q] Ibid. Sect. de Concilio autem. Dist. 20. Can. Domino Sancto.

text to be corrupted, and to go to[r] mend it by such an emendation, is a plain contradiction to the sense, and that so unclerklike, viz. by putting in two words, and leaving out one; which, whether it may be allowed them by any license less than poetical, let critics judge. St. Gregory[s] saith, that the Constantinopolitans had corrupted the synod of Chalcedon, and that he suspected the same concerning the Ephesine Council. And in the fifth synod there was a notorious prevarication, for there were false epistles of Pope Virgilius, and Menna the patriarch of Constantinople, inserted; and so they passed for authentic till they were discovered in the sixth general synod, actions twelve and fourteen. And not only false decrees and actions may creep into the codes of councils; but sometimes the authority of a learned man may abuse the Church with pretended decrees, of which there is no copy or shadow in the code itself. And thus Thomas Aquinas says that the Epistle to the Hebrews was reckoned in the canon by the Nicene Council, no shadow of which appears in those copies we now have of it; and this pretence and the reputation of the man prevailed so far with Melchior Canus, the learned bishop of the Canaries, that he believed it upon this ground, 'Vir sanctus rem adeo gravem non astrueret, nisi compertum habuisset:' and there are many things which have prevailed upon less reason, and a more slight authority. And that very Council of Nice hath not only been pretended by Aquinas, but very much abused by others, and its authority and great reputation have made it more liable to the fraud and pretences of idle people. For whereas the Nicene fathers made but twenty canons (for so many and no more were received by Cecilian of Carthage,[t] that was at Nice in the council; by Austin,[u] and two hundred African bishops with him; by St. Cyril[x] of Alexandria, by Atticus[y] of Constantinople, by Ruffinus,[z] Isidore, and Theodoret, as Baronius[a] witnesses); yet there are fourscore lately found out in an Arabian MS. and published in Latin by Turrian and Alfonsus of Pisa, Jesuits surely, and like to be masters of

[r] Pro [cùm esset in bello Persarum] legi volunt [cùm reversus esset è bello Persarum]. Euseb. Chronicon. Vide Binium in notis ad Concil. Sinuessanum, tom. i. Concil. et Baron. Annal. tom. iii. A.D. 303. num. 107.

[s] Lib. v. Ep. 14. ad Narsem. Comment. in Hebr.

[t] Con. Carthag. vi. cap. 9. [u] Con. Afric. [x] Ibid. c. 102. c. 133.

[y] Lib. i. Eccl. Hist. c. 6. [z] In Princ. Con. de Synod. princ.

[a] Baronius, tom. iii. A.D. 325. n. 156. tom. iii. ad A.D. 325. n. 62, 63.

the mint. And not only the canons, but the very acts of the Nicene Council, are false and spurious, and are so confessed by Baronius; though how he and[b] Lindanus will be reconciled upon the point, I neither know well nor much care. Now, if one council be corrupted, we see, by the instance of St. Gregory, that another can be suspected, and so all: because he found the Council of Chalcedon corrupted, he suspected also the Ephesine; and another might have suspected more, for the Nicene was tampered foully with; and so three of the four generals were sullied, and made suspicious, and therefore we could not be secure of any. If false acts be inserted in one council, who can trust the actions of any, unless he had the keeping the records himself, or durst swear for the register? And if a very learned man, as Thomas Aquinas was, did either wilfully deceive us, or was himself ignorantly abused, in allegation of a canon which was not, it is but a very fallible topic at the best: and the most holy man that is, may be abused himself, and the wisest may deceive others.

10. Sixthly and lastly, to all this and to the former instances, by way of corollary, I add some more particulars, in which it is notorious that councils general and national, that is, such as were either general by original, or by adoption into the canon of the catholic Church, did err, and were actually deceived. The first Council of Toledo admits to the communion him that hath a concubine, so he have no wife besides: and this council is approved by Pope Leo in the ninety-second epistle to Rusticus, bishop of Narbona. Gratian says, that the council means by a concubine, a wife married 'sine dote et solennitate;'[c] but this is daubing with untempered mortar. For though it was a custom amongst the Jews to distinguish wives from their concubines, by dowry and legal solemnities, yet the Christian distinguished them no otherwise than as lawful and unlawful, than as chastity and fornication. And besides, if by a concubine is meant a lawful wife without a dowry, to what purpose should the council make a law, that such a one might be admitted to the communion? For I suppose it was never thought to be a law of Christianity, that a man should have a portion with his wife, nor he that married a poor virgin, should deserve to be excommunicate. So that Gratian and his

[b] Panopl. lib. ii. c. 6.

[c] Dist. 34. can. omnibus.

followers are pressed so with this canon, that to avoid the impiety of it, they expound it to a signification without sense or purpose. But the business then was, that adultery was so public and notorious a practice, that the council did choose rather to endure simple fornication, that by such permission of a less, they might slacken the public custom of a greater; just as at Rome they permit stews, to prevent unnatural sins. But that, by a public sanction, fornicators, habitually and notoriously such, should be admitted to the holy communion, was an act of priests so unfit for priests, that no excuse can make it white or clean. The Council of Worms[d] does authorize a superstitious custom at that time too much used, of discovering stolen goods by the holy sacrament, which[e] Aquinas justly condemns for superstition. The[f] sixth synod separates persons lawfully married upon an accusation and crime of heresy. The Roman Council under[g] Pope Nicolas II. defined, that not only the sacrament of Christ's body, but the very body itself of our blessed Saviour, is handled and broke by the hands of the priest, and chewed by the teeth of the communicants: which is a manifest error derogatory from the truth of Christ's beatifical resurrection, and glorification in the heavens, and disavowed by the Church of Rome itself. But Bellarmine,[h] that answers all the arguments in the world, whether it be possible or not possible, would fain make the matter fair, and the decree tolerable; for, says he, the decree means that the body is broken, not in itself, but in the sign; and yet the decree says, that not only the sacrament (which, if any thing be, is certainly the sign), but the very body itself is broken and champed with hands and teeth respectively: which indeed was nothing but a plain over-acting the article in contradiction to Berengarius. And the answer of Bellarmine is not sense; for he denies that the body itself is broken in itself (that was the error we charged upon the Roman synod), and the sign abstracting from the body is not broken (for that was the opinion that council condemned in Berengarius): but, says Bellarmine, the body in the sign. What is that? for neither the sign, nor the body, nor both together, are broken. For if either of them distinctly, they either rush upon the error which the

[d] Cap. iii. [e] Per. 3. q. 80. a. 6. ad. 3. m. [f] Can. 72.
[g] Can. ego Berengar. de Consecrat. dist. 2. [h] Lib. ii. c. 8. de Concil.

Roman synod condemned in Berengarius, or upon that which they would fain excuse in Pope Nicolas: but if both are broken, then it is true to affirm it of either, and then the council is blasphemous in saying, that Christ's glorified body is passible and frangible by natural manducation. So that it is and it is not this way, and yet it is no way else; but it is some way, and they know not how; and the council spake blasphemy, but it must be made innocent; and, therefore, it was requisite a cloud of distinction should be raised, that the unwary reader might be amused, and the degree scape untouched: but the truth is, they that undertake to justify all that other men say, must be more subtile than they that said it, and must use such distinction, which possibly the first authors did not understand. But I will multiply no more instances, for what instance soever I shall bring, some or other will be answering it; which thing is so far from satisfying me in the particulars, that it increases the difficulty in the general, and satisfies me in my first belief. For[1] if no decrees of councils can make against them, though they seem never so plain against them, then let others be allowed the same liberty (and there is all the reason in the world they should), and no decree shall conclude against any doctrine that they have already entertained: and by this means the Church is no fitter instrument to decree controversies than the Scripture itself, there being as much obscurity and disputing in the sense, and the manner, and the degree, and the competency, and the obligation of the decree of a council, as of a place of Scripture. And what are we the nearer for a decree, if any sophister shall think his elusion enough to contest against the authority of a council? yet this they do, that pretend highest for their authority: which consideration, or some like it, might possibly make Gratian prefer St. Jerome's single testimony before a whole council, because he had Scripture on his side, which says, that the authority of councils is not *αὐτόπιστος*, and that councils may possibly recede from their rule, from Scripture: and in that, which indeed was the case, a single person proceeding according to rule is a better argument: so saith Panormitan; "In concernentibus fidem

[1] Illa demum eis videntur edicta et concilia, quæ in rem suam faciunt; reliqua non pluris æstimant quàm conventum mulierc ularum in textrina vel thermis. Lud. Vives in Scholiis, lib. xx. Aug. de Civ. Dei. c. 26. 36. q. 2. c. placuit.

etiam dictum unius privati esset dicto Papæ aut totius concilii præferendum, si ille moveretur melioribus argumentis."[k]

11. I end this discourse with representing the words of Gregory Nazianzen in his epistle to Procopius: "Ego, si vera scribere oportet, ita animo affectus sum, ut omnia episcoporum concilia fugiam, quoniam nullius concilii finem lætum faustumque vidi, nec quod depulsionem malorum potiùs quàm accessionem et incrementum habuerit."[l]— But I will not be so severe and dogmatical against them: for I believe many councils to have been called with sufficient authority, to have been managed with singular piety and prudence, and to have been finished with admirable success and truth. And where we find such councils, he that will not with all veneration believe their decrees, and receive their sanctions, understands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our souls, whose "faith we are bound to follow," saith St. Paul;[m] that is, so long as they follow Christ: and certainly many councils have done so. But this was then when the public interest of Christendom was better conserved in determining a true article, than in finding a discreet temper, or a wise expedient to satisfy disagreeing persons. (As the fathers at Trent did, and the Lutherans and Calvinists did at Sendomir in Polonia, and the Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians did at Dort.) It was in ages when the sum of religion did not consist in maintaining the *grandezza* of the papacy; where there was no order of men with a fourth vow upon them to advance St. Peter's chair; when there was no man, nor any company of men, that esteemed themselves infallible: and therefore they searched for truth, as if they meant to find, and would believe it if they could see it proved, not resolved to prove it because they had upon chance or interest believed it; then they had rather have spoken a truth, than upheld their reputation but only in order to truth. This was done sometimes, and when it was done, God's Spirit never failed them, but gave them such assistances as were sufficient to that good end for which

[k] Par. 1. de election. et elect. potest. c. significasti.

[l] Athanas. lib. de Synod. Frustrà igitur circumcursitantes prætexunt ob fidem se synodos postulare, cùm sit Divina Scriptura omnibus potentior.

[m] Heb. xiii. 7.

they were assembled, and did implore his aid. And therefore it is that the four general councils, so called by way of eminence, have gained so great a reputation above all others; not because they had a better promise, or more special assistances, but because they proceeded better according to the rule, with less faction, without ambition and temporal ends.

12. And yet those very assemblies of bishops had no authority by their decrees to make a divine faith, or to constitute new objects of necessary credence; they made nothing true that was not so before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent guides, and whose decrees are most certainly to determine all those who have no argument to the contrary, of greater force and efficacy than the authority or reasons of the council. And there is a duty owing to every parish priest, and to every diocesan bishop; these are appointed over us, and to answer for our souls, and are therefore morally to guide us, as reasonable creatures are to be guided, that is, by reason and discourse: for in things of judgment and understanding, they are but in form next above beasts that are to be ruled by the imperiousness and absoluteness of authority, unless the authority be divine, that is, infallible. Now then, in a juster height, but still in its true proportion, assemblies of bishops are to guide us with a higher authority, because, in reason, it is supposed they will do it better, with more argument and certainty, and with decrees, which have the advantage by being the results of many discourses of very wise and good men. But that the authority of general councils was never esteemed absolute, infallible, and unlimited, appears in this, that, before they were obliging, it was necessary that each particular church respectively should accept them, "Concurrente universali totius ecclesiæ consensu, &c., in declaratione veritatum quæ credendæ sunt,"[n] &c. That is the way of making the decrees of councils become authentic, and be turned into a law, as Gerson observes; and till they did, their decrees were but a dead letter: and therefore it is that these later popes have so laboured that the Council of Trent should be received in France; and Carolus Molineus, a

[n] Vide St. August. lib. i. c. 18. de Bapt. contra Donat.

great lawyer, and of the Roman communion, disputed° against the reception. And this is a known condition in the canon law; but it proves plainly that the decrees of councils have their authority from the voluntary submission of the particular churches, not from the prime sanction and constitution of the council. And there is great reason it should: for as the representative body of the Church derives all power from the diffusive body which is represented, so it resolves into it; and though it may have all the legal power, yet it hath not all the natural; for more able men may be unsent than sent; and they who are sent may be wrought upon by stratagem, which cannot happen to the whole diffusive Church. It is therefore most fit, that since the legal power, that is, the external, was passed over to the body representative, yet the efficacy of it and the internal should so still remain in the diffusive, as to have power to consider whether their representatives did their duty, yea or no, and so to proceed accordingly. For unless it be in matters of justice, in which the interest of a third person is concerned, no man will or can be supposed to pass away all power from himself of doing himself right, in matters personal, proper, and of so high concernment: it is most unnatural and unreasonable. But, besides that, they are excellent instruments of peace, the best human judicatories in the world, rare sermons for the determining a point in controversy, and the greatest probability from human authority; besides these advantages, I say, I know nothing greater that general councils can pretend to with reason and argument sufficient to satisfy any wise man. And as there was never any council so general, but it might have been more general; for in respect of the whole Church, even Nice itself was but a small assembly; so there is no decree so well constituted, but it may be proved by an argument higher than the authority of the council: and therefore general councils, and national, and provincial, and diocesan, in their several degrees, are excellent guides for the prophets, and directions and instructions for their prophesyings; but not of weight and authority to restrain their liberty so wholly, but that they may dissent, when they see a reason strong enough

° So did the third estate of France in the convention of the three estates under Louis XIII. earnestly contend against it.

so to persuade them, as to be willing, upon the confidence of that reason and their own sincerity, to answer to God for such their modesty, and peaceable, but, as they believe, their necessary, disagreeing.

SECTION VII.

Of the Fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his expounding Scripture, and resolving Questions.

1. But since the question between the council and the pope grew high, there have not wanted abettors so confident on the pope's behalf, as to believe general councils to be nothing but pomps and solemnities of the catholic Church, and that all the authority of determining controversies is formally and effectually in the pope. And therefore, to appeal from the pope to a future council is a heresy, yea, and treason too, said Pope Pius II. and therefore it concerns us now to be wise and wary. But before I proceed, I must needs remember that Pope Pius II. while he was the wise and learned Æneas Sylvius,[p] was very confident for the pre-eminence of a council, and gave a merry reason why more clerks were for the popes than the council, though the truth was on the other side, even because the popes give bishopricks and abbeys, but councils give none: and yet, as soon as he was made pope, as if he had been inspired, his eyes were open to see the great privileges of St. Peter's chair, which before he could not see, being amused with the truth, or else with the reputation of a general council. But however, there are many that hope to make it good, that the pope is the universal and the infallible doctor, that he breathes decrees as oracles, that to dissent from any of his cathedral determinations is absolute heresy, the rule of faith being nothing else but conformity to the chair of Peter. So that here we have met a restraint of prophecy indeed: but yet, to make amends, I hope we shall have an infallible guide; and when a man is in heaven, he will never complain that his choice is taken from

[p] Epist. ad Norimberg. Patrum et avorum nostrorum tempore pauci audebant dicere Papam esse supra concilium, lib. i. de gestis Concil. Basil.

him, and that he is confined to love and to admire, since his love and his admiration are fixed upon that which makes him happy, even upon God himself. And in the Church of Rome there is in a lower degree, but in a true proportion, as little cause to be troubled that we are confined to believe just so, and no choice left us for our understandings to discover, or our wills to choose, because, though we be limited, yet we are appointed out where we ought to rest, we are confined to our centre, and there, where our understandings will be satisfied, and therefore will be quiet, and where, after all our strivings, studies, and endeavours, we desire to come, that is, to truth; for there we are secured to find it, because we have a guide that is infallible. If this prove true, we are well enough. But if it be false or uncertain, it were better we had still kept our liberty, than be cozened out of it with gay pretences. This, then, we must consider.

2. And here we shall be oppressed with a cloud of witnesses: for what more plain than the commission given to Peter? "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church;" and, "To thee will I give the keys:" and again, "For thee have I prayed that thy faith fail not; but thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren." And again, "If thou lovest me, feed my sheep." Now nothing of this being spoken to any of the other apostles, by one of these places St. Peter must needs be appointed foundation or head of the Church, and by consequence he is to rule and govern all. By some other of these places he is made the supreme pastor, and he is to teach and determine all, and enabled with an infallible power so to do. And in a right understanding of these authorities, the fathers speak great things of the chair of Peter; for we are as much bound to believe that all this was spoken to Peter's successors, as to his person; that must by all means be supposed, and so did the old doctors, who had as much certainty of it as we have, and no more: but yet let us hear what they have said.[q] "To this Church, by reason of its more powerful principality, it is necessary all churches round about should convene." "In this, tradition apostolical always was observed, and, therefore, to communicate with this bishop, with this[r] Church, was to be

[q] Irenæ. contra Hæres. lib. iii. c. 3.

[r] Ambr. de Obitu Salyri, et lib. i. Ep. 4. ad Imp. Cyp. Ep. 52.

in communion with the Church catholic."—"To this Church error or perfidiousness cannot have access."[s]—"Against this see the gates of hell cannot prevail."[t]—"For we know this Church to be built upon a rock."[u]—"And whoever eats the lamb not within this house, is profane; he that is not in the ark of Noah, perishes in the inundation of waters. He that gathers not with this bishop, he scatters; and he that belongeth not to Christ, must needs belong to antichrist." And that is his final sentence. But if you would have all this proved by an infallible argument, Optatus[x] of Milevis in Africa, supplies it to us from the very name of Peter: for therefore Christ gave him the cognomination of Cephas ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς, to shew that St. Peter was the visible *head* of the catholic Church. 'Dignum patellâ operculum!' This long harangue must needs be full of tragedy to all them that take liberty to themselves to follow Scripture and their best guides, if it happens in that liberty that they depart from the persuasions of the communion of Rome. But, indeed, if with the peace of the bishops of Rome I may say it, this scene is the most unhandsomely laid, and the worst carried, of any of those pretences that have lately abused Christendom.

3. First; against the allegations of Scripture I shall lay no greater prejudice than this, that if a person disinterested should see them, and consider what the products of them might possibly be, the last thing that he would think of would be, how that any of these places should serve the ends or pretences of the Church of Rome. For, to instance in one of the particulars, that man had need have a strong fancy who imagines, that because Christ prayed for St. Peter, that (being he had designed him to be one of those upon whose preaching and doctrine he did mean to constitute a church) 'his faith might not fail' (for it was necessary that no bitterness or stopping should be in one of the first springs, lest the current be either spoiled or obstructed), that therefore the faith of Pope Alexander VI. or Gregory, or Clement, fifteen hundred years after, should be preserved by virtue of that prayer, which the form of words, the time, the occasion, the manner of the address, the effect itself, and all the circumstances of the action and person, did determine to be personal.

[s] Cyp. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.
[t] St. Austin in Psal. contra partem Donat.
[u] Hieron. Ep. 57. ad Damasum.
[x] Lib. ii. contra Parmenian.

And when it was more than personal, St. Peter did not represent his successors at Rome, but the whole catholic Church, say Aquinas and the divines of the university of Paris. 'Volunt enim pro solâ ecclesia esse oratum,' says Bellarmine of them: and the gloss upon the canon law plainly denies the effect of this prayer at all to appertain to the Pope; "Quære de qua ecclesia intelligas quod hîc dicitur quòd non possit errare: an de ipso Papa qui ecclesia dicitur? sed certum est quòd Papa errare potest—Respondeo, ipsa congregatio fidelium hîc dicitur ecclesia, et talis ecclesia non potest non esse; nam ipse Dominus orat pro ecclesia, et voluntate labiorum suorum non fraudabitur." But there is a little danger in this argument when we well consider it; but it is likely to redound on the head of them whose turns it should serve. For it may be remembered, that for all this prayer of Christ for St. Peter, the good man fell foully, and denied his Master shamefully: and shall Christ's prayer be of greater efficacy for his successors, for whom it was made but indirectly and by consequence, than for himself, for whom it was directly and in the first intention? And if not, then, for all this argument, the popes may deny Christ as well as their chief predecessor Peter. But it would not be forgotten how the Roman doctors will by no means allow, that St. Peter was then the chief bishop or pope, when he denied his Master. But then much less was he chosen chief bishop, when the prayer was made for him, because the prayer was made before his fall; that is, before that time in which it is confessed he was not as yet made pope: and how, then, the whole succession of the papacy should be entitled to it, passes the length of my hand to span. But then, also, if it be supposed and allowed, that these words shall entail infallibility upon the chair of Rome, why shall not also all the apostolical sees be infallible as well as Rome? why shall not Constantinople or Byzantium, where St. Andrew sat? why shall not Ephesus, where St. John sat? or Jerusalem, where St. James sat? for Christ prayed for them all, "ut Pater sanctificaret eos sua veritate."[y]

4. Secondly; for 'tibi dabo claves,' was it personal or not? If it were, then the bishops of Rome have nothing to do

[y] 2. 2æ q. 2. a. 6. ar. 6. ad 3 m. Lib. iv. de Rom. Pont. c. 3. sect. 1. Caus. 21. cap. à recta. q. 1. 29. dist. Anastasius 60. dist. si Papa. [z] John, xvii.

with it: if it were not, then by what argument will it be made evident that St. Peter in the promise represented only his successors, and not the whole college of apostles, and the whole hierarchy? For if St. Peter was chief of the apostles, and head of the Church, he might fair enough be the representative of the whole college, and receive it in their right as well as his own: which also is certain that it was so; for the same promise of binding and loosing (which certainly was all that the keys were given for) was made afterward to all the apostles,[a] and the power of remitting and retaining (which in reason and according to the style of the Church are the same thing in other words) was actually given to all the apostles: and, unless that was the performing the first and second promise, we find it not recorded in Scripture how or when, or whether yet or no, the promise be performed. That promise, I say, which did not pertain to Peter principally and by origination, and to the rest by communication, society, and adherence, but that promise which was made to Peter first, but not for himself, but for all the college, and for all their successors; and then made the second time to them all, without representation, but in diffusion, and performed to all alike in presence, except St. Thomas. And if he went to St. Peter to derive it from him, I know not; I find no record for that: but that Christ conveyed the promise to him by the same commission, the Church yet never doubted, nor had she any reason. But this matter is too notorious: I say no more to it, but repeat the words and arguments of St. Austin; "Si hoc Petro tantum dictum est, non facit hoc ecclesia:"[b] If the keys were only given and so promised to St. Peter, that the Church hath not the keys, then the Church can neither bind nor loose, remit nor retain; which God forbid. If any man should endeavour to answer this argument, I leave him and St. Austin to contest it.

5. Thirdly; for 'pasce oves,' there is little in that allegation, besides the boldness of the objectors: for were not all the apostles bound to feed Christ's sheep? Had they not all the commission from Christ and Christ's Spirit immediately? St. Paul had certainly. Did not St. Peter himself say to all the bishops of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, that they should feed the flock of God, and

[a] Matt. xviii. [b] Tra. 50. in Joann.

the great Bishop and Shepherd should give them an immarcessible crown? plainly implying, that from whence they derived their authority, from him they were sure of a reward: in pursuance of which St. Cyprian laid his argument upon this basis, "Nam cùm statutum sit omnibus nobis," &c. "et singulis pastoribus portio gregis,"[c] &c. Did not St. Paul call to the bishops of Ephesus to "feed the flock of God, of which the Holy Ghost hath made them bishops or overseers?" And that this very commission was spoken to St. Peter not in a personal, but a public capacity, and in him spoke to all the apostles, we see attested by St. Austin and St. Ambrose,[d] and generally by all antiquity: and it so concerned even every priest, that Damasus was willing enough to have St. Jerome explicate many questions for him. And Liberius writes an epistle to Athanasius, with much modesty, requiring his advice in a question of faith, ἵνα κἀγὼ πεποιθὼς ὦ ἀδιακρίτως περὶ ὧν ἀξιοῖς κελεύειν μοι.—"That I also may be persuaded, without all doubting, of those things which you shall be pleased to command me."[e] Now, Liberius need not to have troubled himself to have written into the east to Athanasius; for if he had but seated himself in his chair, and made the dictate, the result of his pen and ink would certainly have taught him and all the Church: but that the good pope was ignorant their 'pasce oves' was his own charter and prerogative, or that any other words of Scripture had made him to be infallible; or if he was not ignorant of it, he did very ill to compliment himself out of it. So did all those bishops of Rome, that in that troublesome and unprofitable question of Easter, being unsatisfied in the supputation of the Egyptians, and the definitions of the mathematical bishops of Alexandria, did yet require and entreat St. Ambrose to tell them his opinion, as he himself witnesses.[f] If 'pasce oves' belongs only to the pope by primary title, in these cases the sheep came to feed the shepherd; which, though it was well enough in the thing, is very ill for the pretensions of the Roman bishops. And if we consider how little many of the popes have done towards feeding the sheep of Christ, we shall hardly determine which is the greater prevarication,

[c] Lib. i. Epist. 3.
[d] De Agone Christi, c. 30.
[e] Epist. ad Athanas. apud Athanas. tom. i. p. 42. Paris.
[f] Lib. x. Epist. 33.

that the pope should claim the whole commission to be granted to him, or that the execution of the commission should be wholly passed over to others. And, it may be, there is a mystery in it, that since St. Peter sent a bishop with his staff to raise up a disciple of his from the dead, who was afterward bishop of Triers, the popes of Rome never wear a pastoral staff, except it be in that diocess, says Aquinas:[g] for great reason, that he who does not do the office, should not bear the symbol. But a man would think that the pope's master of the ceremonies was ill-advised not to assign a pastoral staff to him, who pretends the commission of 'pasce oves' to belong to him by prime right and origination. But this is not a business to be merry in.

6. But the great support is expected from 'Tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram ædificabo ecclesiam,' &c. Now, there being so great difference in the exposition of these words by persons disinterested, who, if any, might be allowed to judge in this question, it is certain that neither one sense nor other can be obtruded for an article of faith, much less as a catholicon instead of all, by constituting an authority which should guide us in all faith, and determine us in all questions. For if the Church was not built upon the person of Peter, then his successors can challenge nothing from this instance: now that it was the confession of Peter upon which the Church was to rely for ever, we have witnesses very credible: St. Ignatius,[h] St. Basil,[i] St. Hilary,[k] St. Gregory Nyssen,[l] St. Gregory the Great,[m] St. Austin,[n] St. Cyril of Alexandria,[o] Isidore Pelusiot,[p] and very many more. And although all these witnesses concurring cannot make a proposition to be true, yet they are sufficient witnesses that it was not the universal belief of Christendom that the Church was built upon St. Peter's person. Cardinal Perron hath a fine fancy to elude this variety of exposition, and the consequents of it. For, saith he, these expositions are not contrary or exclusive of each other, but inclusive and consequent to each other: for the Church is founded casually upon the confession of St. Peter, formally upon the ministry of his person, and this was a reward or a consequent of the former;

[g] M. 4. Sent. dist. 24. [h] Ad Philadelph. [i] Seleuc. orat. 25.
[k] Lib. vi. de Trinit. [l] De Trinitate advers. Judæos. [m] Lib. iii. Ep. 33.
[n] In 1. Ep. Joann. tr. 10. [o] De Trinit. lib. iv. [p] Lib. i. Ep. 235.

so that these expositions are both true, but they are conjoined as mediate and immediate, direct and collateral, literal and moral, original and perpetual, accessary and temporal, the one consigned at the beginning, the other introduced upon occasion. For before the spring of the Arian heresy, the fathers expounded these words of the person of Peter; but after the Arians troubled them, the fathers finding great authority and energy in this confession of Peter for the establishment of the natural filiation of the Son of God, to advance the reputation of these words and the force of the argument, gave themselves license to expound these words to the present advantage, and to make the confession of Peter to be the foundation of the Church, that if the Arians should encounter this authority, they might with more prejudice to their persons declaim against their cause by saying they overthrew the foundation of the Church. Besides that this answer does much dishonour the reputation of the fathers' integrity, and makes their interpretations less credible, as being made, not of knowledge or reason, but of necessity, and to serve a present turn, it is also false: for Ignatius[q] expounds it in a spiritual sense, which also the liturgy attributed to St. James calls ἐπὶ πέτραν τῆς πίστεως— and Origen[r] expounds it mystically to a third purpose, but exclusively to this: and all these were before the Arian controversy. But if it be lawful to make such unproved observations, it would have been to better purpose and more reason to have observed it thus: the fathers, so long as the bishop of Rome kept himself to the limits prescribed him by Christ, and indulged to him by the constitution or concession of the Church, were unwary and apt to expound this place of the person of Peter: but when the Church began to enlarge her phylacteries by the favour of princes and the sunshine of a prosperous fortune,—and the pope by the advantage of the imperial seat and other accidents began to invade upon the other bishops and patriarchs, then, that he might have no colour from Scripture for such new pretensions, they did most generally turn the stream of their expositions from the person to the confession of Peter, and declared that to be the foundation of the Church. And thus I have requited fancy with fancy: but for the main point,

[q] Epist. ad Philadelph. [r] In c. xvi. Matt. tract. 1.

that these two expositions are inclusive of each other, I find no warrant. For though they may consist together well enough, if Christ had so intended them; yet unless it could be shewn by some circumstance of the text, or some other extrinsical argument, that they must be so, and that both senses were actually intended, it is but 'gratis dictum,' and a begging of the question, to say that they are so, and the fancy so new, that when St. Austin had expounded this place of the person of Peter, he reviews it again, and in his Retractations leaves every man to his liberty which to take, as having nothing certain in this article: which had been altogether needless if he had believed them to be inclusively in each other; neither of them had need to have been retracted, both were alike true, both of them might have been believed. But I said the fancy was new, and I had reason; for it was so unknown till yesterday, that even the late writers of his own side expound the words of the confession of St. Peter exclusively to his person or any thing else, as is to be seen in Marsitius,[s] Petrus de Aliaco,[t] and the gloss upon Dist. 19. can. 'ità Dominus,' ut suprá. Which also was the interpretation of Phavorinus Camers, their own bishop, from whom they learnt the resemblance of the words Πέτρος and Πέτρα, of which they have made so many gay discourses. Πέτρα στερεά ἐστι πίστις ἀῤῥαγὴς Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ θεμελίῳ προθεμελιουμένη.

7. Fifthly; but upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from so great and numerous testimony of fathers, I am willing to believe that it was not the confession of St. Peter, but his person, upon which Christ said he would build his Church, or that these expositions are consistent with and consequent to each other; that this confession was the objective foundation of faith, and Christ and his apostles the subjective; Christ principally, and St. Peter instrumentally: and yet I understand not any advantage will hence accrue to the see of Rome. For upon St. Peter it was built, but not alone; for it was "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone:" and when St. Paul reckoned the economy of hierarchy, he reckons not Peter first, and then the apostles; but first apostles, secondarily prophets, &c. And

[s] Defens. Pacis, part. ii. c. 28. [t] Recommend. Sacr. Script.

whatsoever is first, either is before all things else, or at least nothing is before it. So that at least St. Peter is not before all the rest of the apostles; which also St. Paul expressly avers; "I am in nothing inferior to the very chiefest of the apostles," no, not in the very being a rock and a foundation: and it was of the Church of Ephesus that St. Paul said in particular it was "columna et firmamentum veritatis:" that church was,—not excluding others, for they also were as much as she: for so we keep close and be united to the corner-stone, although some be master-builders, yet all may build; and we have known whole nations converted by laymen and women, who have been builders so far as to bring them to the corner-stone.[u]

8. Sixthly; but suppose all these things concern St. Peter in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the bishops of Rome to do with this? For how will it appear that these promises and commissions did relate to him as a particular bishop, and not as a public apostle? since this latter is so much the more likely, because the great pretence of all seems in reason more proportionable to the founding of a church, than its continuance. And yet if they did relate to him as a particular bishop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty), yet why shall St. Clement or Linus rather succeed in this great office of headship than St. John or any of the apostles that survived Peter? It is no way likely a private person should skip over the head of an apostle. Or why shall his successors at Rome more enjoy the benefit of it than his successors at Antioch? since that he was at Antioch and preached there, we have a Divine authority; but that he did so at Rome, at most we have but a human. And if it be replied that because he died at Rome, it was argument enough that there his successors were to inherit his privilege, this besides that at most it is but one little degree of probability, and so not of strength sufficient to support an article of faith, it makes that the great Divine right of Rome, and the apostolical presidency, was so contingent and fallible as to depend upon the decree of Nero; and if he had sent him to Antioch, there to have suffered martyrdom, the bishops of that town had been heads of the catholic Church. And this thing presses the harder,

[u] Vid. Socrat. lib. i. c. 19, 20. Sozom. lib. ii. c. 14. Niceph. lib. xiv. c. 40.

because it is held by no mean persons in the Church of Rome, that the bishoprick of Rome and the papacy are things separable, and the pope may quit that see, and sit in another: which to my understanding is an argument, that he that succeeded Peter at Antioch, is as much supreme by Divine right as he that sits at Rome; both alike, that is, neither by Divine ordinance.[x] For if the Roman bishops by Christ's intention were to be head of the Church, then by the same intention the succession must be continued in that see; and then let the pope go whither he will, the bishop of Rome must be the head: which they themselves deny, and the pope himself did not believe, when in a schism he sat at Avignon. And that it was to be continued in the see of Rome, it is but offered to us upon conjecture, upon an act of providence, as they fancy it, so ordering it by vision; and this proved by an author which themselves call fabulous and apocryphal, under the name of Linus, in "Biblioth. Patrum de passione Petri et Pauli." A goodly building which relies upon an event that was accidental, whose purpose was but insinuated, the meaning of it but conjectured at, and this conjecture so uncertain, that it was an imperfect aim at the purpose of an event, which, whether it was true or no, was so uncertain, that it is ten to one there was no such matter. And yet again, another degree of uncertainty is, to whom the bishops of Rome do succeed. For St. Paul was as much bishop of Rome as St. Peter was; there he presided, there he preached, and he it was that was the doctor of the uncircumcision and of the Gentiles, St. Peter of the circumcision and of the Jews only; and, therefore, the converted Jews at Rome might with better reason claim the privilege of St. Peter, than the Romans, and the churches in her communion, who do not derive from Jewish parents.

9. Seventhly; If the words were never so appropriate to Peter, or also communicated to his successors, yet of what value will the consequent be? what prerogative is entailed upon the chair of Rome? For that St. Peter was the ministerial head of the Church, is the most that is desired to be proved by those and all other words brought for the same purposes, and interests of that see. Now, let the ministerial head have what dignity can be imagined, let him be the first (and in all communities that are regular and orderly

[x] Vide Cameracens. Qu. vespert.

there must be something that is first upon certain occasions, where an equal power cannot be exercised, and made pompous or ceremonial): but will this ministerial headship infer an infallibility? will it infer more than the headship of the Jewish synagogue, where clearly the high-priest was supreme in many senses, yet in no sense infallible? will it infer more to us than it did amongst the apostles, amongst whom if for order's sake St. Peter was the first, yet he had no compulsory power over the apostles? there was no such thing spoke of, nor any such thing put in practice. And that the other apostles were by a personal privilege as infallible as himself, is no reason to hinder the exercise of jurisdiction, or any compulsory power over them; for though in faith they were infallible, yet in manners and matter of fact as likely to err as St. Peter himself was: and certainly there might have something happened in the whole college that might have been a record of his authority, by transmitting an example of the exercise of some judicial power over some one of them. If he had but withstood any of them to their faces, as St. Paul did him, it had been more than yet is said in his behalf. Will the ministerial headship infer any more, than that when the Church, in a community or a public capacity, should do any act of ministry ecclesiastical, he shall be first in order? Suppose this to be a dignity to preside in councils which yet was not always granted him: suppose it to be a power of taking cognizance of the major causes of bishops when councils cannot be called: suppose it a double voice, or the last decisive, or the negative in the causes exterior: suppose it to be what you will of dignity or external regiment, which, when all churches were united in communion, and neither the interest of states nor the engagement of opinions had made disunion, might better have been acted than now it can: yet this will fall infinitely short of a power to determine controversies infallibly, and to prescribe to all men's faith and consciences. A ministerial headship or the prime minister cannot, in any capacity, become the foundation of the Church to any such purpose. And, therefore, men are causelessly amused with such premises, and are afraid of such conclusions which will never follow from the admission of any sense of these words, that can with any probability be pretended.

10. Eighthly; I consider that these arguments from

Scripture are too weak to support such an authority, which pretends to give oracles, and to answer infallibly in questions of faith, because there is greater reason to believe the popes of Rome have erred, and greater certainty of demonstration, than these places give that they are infallible; as will appear by the instances and perpetual experiment of their being deceived, of which there is no question; but of the sense of these places there is. And, indeed, if I had as clear scripture for their infallibility as I have against their half communion, against their service in an unknown tongue, worshipping of images, and divers other articles, I would make no scruple of believing, but limit and conform my understanding to all their dictates, and believe it reasonable all prophesying should be restrained: but till then, I have leave to discourse and to use my reason. And to my reason it seems not likely that neither Christ nor any of his apostles, not St. Peter himself, not St. Paul writing to the Church of Rome, should speak the least word or tittle of the infallibility of their bishops: for it was certainly as convenient to tell us of a remedy, as to foretell that certainly there must needs be heresies, and need of a remedy. And it had been a certain determination of the question, if, when so rare an opportunity was ministered in the question about circumcision, that they should have sent to Peter, who for his infallibility in ordinary, and his power of headship, would not only with reason enough, as being infallibly assisted, but also for his authority, have best determined the question, if at least the first Christians had known so profitable and so excellent a secret. And although we have but little record that the first Council of Jerusalem did much observe the solemnities of law, and the forms of conciliar proceedings, and the ceremonials; yet so much of it as is recorded is against them. St. James, and not St. Peter, gave the final sentence; and although St. Peter determined the question 'pro libertate,' yet St. James made the decree and the 'assumentum' too, and gave sentence they should abstain from some things there mentioned, which by way of temper he judged most expedient: and so it passed. And St. Peter shewed no sign of a superior authority, nothing of superior jurisdiction. Ὅρα δὲ αὐτὸν μετὰ κοινῆς πάντα ποιοῦντα γνώμης, οὐδὲν αὐθεντικῶς οὐδ' ἀρχικῶς.[y]

11. So that if the question be to be determined by Scrip-

[y] St. Chrysost. hom. 3. in act. Apost.

ture, it must either be ended by plain places, or by obscure. Plain places there are none, and these that are with greatest fancy pretended, are expounded by antiquity to contrary purposes. But if obscure places be all the αὐθεντία, by what means shall we infallibly find the sense of them? The pope's interpretation, though in all other cases it might be pretended, in this cannot; for it is the thing in question, and therefore cannot determine for itself. Either, therefore, we have also another infallible guide besides the pope, and so we have two foundations and two heads (for this as well as the other upon the same reason), or else (which is indeed the truth) there is no infallible way to be infallibly assured that the pope is infallible. Now it being against the common condition of men, above the pretences of all other governors ecclesiastical, against the analogy of Scripture and the deportment of the other apostles, against the economy of the Church, and St. Peter's own entertainment, the presumption lies against him, and these places are to be left to their prime intentions, and not put upon the rack, to force them to confess what they never thought.

12. But now for antiquity; if that be deposed in this question, there are so many circumstances to be considered to reconcile their words and their actions, that the process is more troublesome than the argument can be concluding, or the matter considerable: but I shall a little consider it, so far at least as to shew either antiquity said no such thing as is pretended; or, if they did, it is but little considerable, because they did not believe themselves; their practice was the greatest evidence in the world against the pretence of their words. But I am much eased of a long disquisition in this particular (for I love not to prove a question by arguments, whose authority is, in itself, as fallible, and by circumstances made as uncertain as the question) by the saying of Æneas Sylvius, 'that before the Nicene Council every man lived to himself, and small respect was had to the Church of Rome;' which practice could not well consist with the doctrine of their bishop's infallibility, and, by consequence, supreme judgment and last resolution in matters of faith: but especially by the insinuation and consequent acknowledgment of Bellarmine,[z] that for one thousand years together

[z] De Rom. Pont. lib. iv. c. 2. sect. secunda sententia.

the fathers knew not of the doctrine of the pope's infallibility; for Nilus, Gerson, Almain, the divines of Paris, Alphonsus de Castro, and Pope Adrian VI., persons who lived one thousand four hundred years after Christ,—affirm that infallibility is not seated in the pope's person, that he may err, and sometimes actually hath: which is a clear demonstration that the Church knew no such doctrine as this; there had been no decree, nor tradition, nor general opinion of the fathers, or of any age before them; and therefore this opinion, which Bellarmine would fain blast if he could, yet in his conclusion he says it is not 'propriè hæretica:' a device and an expression of his own, without sense or precedent. But if the fathers had spoken of it and believed it, why may not a disagreeing person as well reject their authority when it is in behalf of Rome, as they of Rome without scruple cast them off, when they speak against it? For Bellarmine,—being pressed with the authority of Nilus, bishop of Thessalonica,—and other fathers, says that the pope acknowledges no fathers, but they are all his children, and therefore they cannot depose against him: and if that be true, why shall we take their testimonies for him? for if sons depose in their fathers' behalf, it is twenty to one but the adverse party will be cast, and therefore, at the best, it is but 'suspectum testimonium.' But indeed this discourse signifies nothing but a perpetual uncertainty in such topics, and that, where a violent prejudice or a concerning interest is engaged, men, by not regarding what any man says, proclaim to all the world, that nothing is certain but Divine authority.

13. But I will not take advantage of what Bellarmine says, nor what Stapleton, or any one of them all say, for that will be but to press upon personal persuasions, or to urge a general question with a particular defailance, and the question is never the nearer to an end; for if Bellarmine says any thing that is not to another man's purpose or persuasion, that man will be tried by his own argument, not by another's. And so would every man do that loves his liberty, as all wise men do, and therefore retain it by open violence, or private evasions. But to return.

14. An authority from Irenæus in this question, and on behalf of the pope's infallibility, or the authority of the see of Rome, or of the necessity of communicating with them,

is very fallible: for besides that there are almost a dozen answers to the words of the allegation, as is to be seen in those that trouble themselves in this question with the allegation, and answering such authorities; yet if they should make for the affirmative of this question, it is 'protestatio contra factum.' For Irenæus had no such great opinion of Pope Victor's infallibility, that he believed things in the same degree of necessity that the pope did; for therefore he chides him for excommunicating the Asian bishops ἀθρόως, 'all at a blow,'—in the question concerning Easter-day: and in a question of faith he expressly disagreed from the doctrine of Rome: for Irenæus was of the millenary opinion, and believed it to be a tradition apostolical. Now if the Church of Rome was of that opinion then, why is she not now? where is the succession of her doctrine? But if she was not of that opinion then, and Irenæus was, where was his belief of that church's infallibility? The same I urge concerning St. Cyprian, who was the head of a sect in opposition to the Church of Rome in the question of rebaptization; and he and the abettors, Firmilian and the other bishops of Cappadocia, and the vicinage, spoke harsh words of Stephen, and such as became them not to speak to an infallible doctor, and the supreme head of the Church. I will urge none of them to the disadvantage of that see, but only note the satires of Firmilian against him, because it is of good use, to shew that it is possible for them, in their ill carriage, to blast the reputation and efficacy of a great authority. For he says that that church did pretend the authority of the apostles, "cùm in multis sacramentis divinæ rei à principio discrepet, et ab ecclesia Hierosolymitana, et defamet Petrum et Paulum tanquam autores." And a little after, "Justè dedignor (says he) apertam et manifestam stultitiam Stephani, per quam veritas Christianæ petræ aboletur."[a] Which words say plainly, that for all the goodly pretence of apostolical authority, the Church of Rome did then, in many things of religion, disagree from Divine institution (and from the Church of Jerusalem, which they had as great esteem of, for religion's sake, as of Rome for its principality); and that still in pretending to St. Peter and St. Paul they dishonoured those blessed apostles, and destroyed

[a] Ep. Firmiliani cont. Stephan. ad Cyprian. Vide etiam Ep. Cypriani ad Pompeium.

the honour of their pretence by their untoward prevarication. Which words, I confess, pass my skill to reconcile them to an opinion of infallibility: and although they were spoken by an angry person, yet they declare that, in Africa, they were not then persuaded, as now they are at Rome: "Nam nec Petrus, quem primum Dominus elegit, vindicavit sibi aliquid, insolenter, aut arroganter assumpsit, ut diceret se primatum tenere."[b] That was their belief then; and how the contrary hath grown up to that height where now it is, all the world is witness. And now I shall not need to note concerning St. Jerome, that he gave a compliment to Damasus that he would not have given to Liberius; "Qui tecum non colligit, spargit." For it might be true enough of Damasus, who was a good bishop and a right believer: but if Liberius's name had been put instead of Damasus, the case had been altered with the name; for St. Jerome did believe and write it so, that Liberius had subscribed to Arianism.[c] And if either he or any of the rest had believed the pope could not be a heretic, nor his faith fail, but be so good and of so competent authority as to be a rule to Christendom; why did they not appeal to the pope in the Arian controversy? why was the bishop of Rome made a party and a concurrent, as other good bishops were, and not a judge and an arbitrator in the question? why did the fathers prescribe so many rules, and cautions, and provisoes, for the discovery of heresy? why were the emperors at so much charge, and the Church at so much trouble, as to call and convene councils respectively, to dispute so frequently, to write so sedulously, to observe all advantages against their adversaries, and for the truth, and never offered to call for the pope to determine the question in his chair? Certainly no way could have been so expedite, none so concluding and peremptory, none could have convinced so certainly, none could have triumphed so openly over all discrepants, as this, if they had known of any such thing as his being infallible, or that he had been appointed by Christ to be the judge of controversies. And therefore I will not trouble this discourse to excuse any more words, either pretended or really said to this purpose of the pope, for they would but make books

[b] Cyprian. Epist. ad Quintum fratrem.

[c] De Script. Eccles. in Fortunatian.

swell, and the question endless: I shall only to this purpose observe, that the old writers were so far from believing the infallibility of the Roman Church or bishop, that many bishops and many churches did actually live and continue out of the Roman communion; particularly St. Austin,[d] who with two hundred and seventeen bishops and their successors for one hundred years together, stood separate from that church, if we may believe their own records. So did Ignatius of Constantinople, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, Firmilian, those bishops of Asia that separated in the question of Easter, and those of Africa, in the question of rebaptization. But besides this, most of them had opinions which the Church of Rome disavows now; and therefore did so then, or else she hath innovated in her doctrine; which, though it be most true and notorious, I am sure she will never confess. But no excuse can be made for St. Austin's disagreeing and contesting in the question of appeals to Rome, the necessity of communicating infants, the absolute damnation of infants to the pains of hell, if they die before baptism, and divers other particulars. It was a famous act of the bishops of Liguria and Istria, who,—seeing the pope of Rome consenting to the fifth synod in disparagement of the famous Council of Chalcedon, which for their own interests they did not like of,—renounced subjection to his patriarchate, and erected a patriarch at Aquileia, who was afterward translated to Venice, where his name remains to this day. It is also notorious, that most of the fathers were of opinion, that the souls of the faithful did not enjoy the beatific vision before doomsday. Whether Rome was then of that opinion or no, I know not; I am sure now they are not, witness the Councils of Florence and Trent: but of this I shall give a more full account afterward. But if to all this which is already noted, we add that great variety of opinions amongst the fathers and councils in assignation of the canon, they not consulting with the bishop of Rome, nor any of them thinking themselves bound to follow his rule in enu-

[d] Ubi illa Augustini et reliquorum prudentia? quis jam ferat crassissimæ ignorantiæ illam vocem in tot et tantis Patribus? Alan. Cop. dialog. pp. 76, 77. Vide etiam Bonifac. II. Ep. ad Eulalium Alexandrinum; Lindanum Panopsi, lib. iv. c. 89, in fine; Salmeron, tom. xii. tract. 68. sect. ad Canonem; Sander. de Visibili Monarchia, lib. vii. n. 411. Baron. tom. x. A.D. 878.

meration of the books of Scripture,—I think no more need to be said as to this particular.

15. Eighthly: but now if, after all this, there be some popes which were notorious heretics and preachers of false doctrine, some that made impious decrees both in faith and manners, some that have determined questions with egregious ignorance and stupidity, some with apparent sophistry, and many to serve their own ends most openly, I suppose then the infallibility will disband, and we may do to him as to other good bishops, believe him when there is a cause; but if there be none, then to use our consciences. "Non enim salvat Christianum, quòd pontifex constanter affirmat præceptum suum esse justum; sed oportet illud examinari, et se juxta regulam superius datam dirigere."[e] I would not instance and repeat the errors of dead bishops, if the extreme boldness of the pretence did not make it necessary. But if we may believe Tertullian, Pope Zepherinus approved the prophecies of Montanus, and upon that approbation granted peace to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, till Praxeas persuaded him to revoke his act. But let this rest upon the credit of Tertullian, whether Zepherinus were a Montanist or no: some such thing there was for certain. Pope Vigilius[f] denied two natures in Christ; and in his epistle to Theodora the empress, anathematized all them that said he had two natures in one person. St. Gregory himself permitted priests to give confirmation, which is all one as if he should permit deacons to consecrate, they being by Divine ordinance annexed to the higher orders: and upon this very ground Adrianus affirms that the pope may err 'in definiendis dogmatibus fidei.'[g] And that we may not fear we shall want instances, we may, to secure it, take their own confession; "Nam multæ sunt decretales hæreticæ" (says Occham, as he is cited by Almain), "et firmiter hoc credo" (says he for his own particular): "sed non licet dogmatizare oppositum, quoniam sunt determinatæ."[h] So that we may as well see that it is certain that popes may be heretics, as that it is dangerous to say so; and therefore there are so few that teach it. All the patriarchs, and the bishop of Rome himself, subscribed to

[e] Tract. de interdict. compos. à Theol. Venet. prop. 13. lib. advers. Praxeam.
[f] Vide Liberal. in breviario, cap. xxii. Durand. 4. dist. 7. q. 4.
[g] Quæ. de confirm. art. ult. [h] 3. dist. 24. q. unicâ.

Arianism, as Baronius confesses: and[i] Gratian affirms that Pope Anastasius II. was stricken of God for communicating with the heretic Photinus.[k] I know it will be made light of, that Gregory VII. saith the very exorcists of the Roman Church are superior to princes. But what shall we think of that decretal of Gregory the Third, who wrote to Boniface his legate in Germany, "quòd illi quorum uxores infirmitate aliquâ morbidâ debitum reddere noluerunt, aliis poterant nubere?"[l] Was this a doctrine fit for the head of the Church, an infallible doctor? It was plainly, if any thing ever was, 'doctrina dæmoniorum,' and is noted for such by Gratian, "caus. 32. q. 7. can. quod proposuisti:" where the gloss also intimates that the same privilege was granted to the Englishmen by Gregory, "quia novi erant in fide."—And sometimes we had little reason to expect much better; for, not to instance in that learned discourse in the[m] canon law 'de majoritate et obedientia,' where the pope's supremacy over kings is proved from the first chapter of Genesis, and the pope is the sun, and the emperor is the moon, for that was the fancy of one pope perhaps, though made authentic and doctrinal by him; it was, if it be possible, more ridiculous, that Pope Innocent the Third urges, that the Mosaical law was still to be observed, and that upon this argument; "Sane," saith he, "cum Deuteronomium secunda lex interpretur, ex vi vocabuli comprobatur, ut quod ibi decernitur, in Testamento Novo debeat observari." Worse yet; for when there was a corruption crept into the decree called 'Sancta Romana,"[n] where, instead of these words, 'Sedulii opus *heroicis* versibus descriptum,' all the old copies, till of late, read, '*hæreticis* versibus descriptum,' this very mistake made many wise men (as Pierius[n] says), yea, Pope Adrian the Sixth,[o] no worse man, believe, that 'all poetry was heretical;' because, forsooth, Pope Gelasius, whose decree that was, although he believed Sedulius to be a good catholic, yet, as they thought, concluded his verses to be heretical. But these were ignorances; it hath been worse amongst some others, whose errors have been more malicious. Pope Honorius was condemned by the sixth general synod, and his

[i] A.D. 357. n. 44.
[k] Dist. 19. c. 9. lib. iv. ep. 2.
[l] Vide Corranz. Sum. Concil. fol. 218. edit. Antwerp.
[m] Cap. per venerab. qui filii sint legitimi.
[n] Dist. 15. apud Gratian.
[o] De Sacerd. barb.

epistles burnt; and in the seventh action of the eighth synod, the acts of the Roman Council under Adrian the Second are recited, in which it is said that Honorius was justly anathematized, because he was convicted of heresy. Bellarmine says, it is probable that Pope Adrian and the Roman Council were deceived with false copies of the sixth synod, and that Honorius was no heretic. To this I say, that although the Roman synod, and the eighth general synod, and Pope Adrian, all together are better witnesses for the thing than Bellarmine's conjecture is against it; yet if we allow his conjecture, we shall lose nothing in the whole: for either the pope is no infallible doctor, but may be a heretic, as Honorius was; or else a council is to us no infallible determiner. I say, as to us: for if Adrian and the whole Roman Council and the eight general were all cozened with false copies of the sixth synod, which was so little a while before them, and whose acts were transacted and kept in the theatre and records of the catholic Church; he is a bold man that will be confident, that he hath true copies now. So that let which they please stand or fall, let the pope be a heretic, or the councils be deceived and palpably abused (for the other, we will dispute it upon other instances and arguments, when we shall know which part they choose), in the meantime we shall get in the general what we lose in particular. This only, this device of saying the copies of the councils were false, was the stratagem of Albertus Pighius nine hundred years after the thing was done; of which invention Pighius was presently admonished, blamed, and wished to recant.[p] Pope Nicolas explicated the mystery of the sacrament with so much ignorance and zeal, that in condemning Berengarius he taught a worse impiety. But what need I any more instances? It is a confessed case by Baronius, by Biel, by Stella, Almain, Occham, and Canus, and generally by the best scholars in the Church of Rome, that a pope may be a heretic, and that some of them actually were so; and no less than three general councils did believe the same thing, viz. the sixth, seventh, and eighth, as Bellarmine is pleased to acknowledge in his fourth book "De Pontifice Romano, c. 11. resp. ad Arg. 4." And the canon "Si Papa, dist. 40,"

[p] Vide diatrib. de act. 6. et 7æ synod. præfatione ad Lectorem; et Dominicum Bannes 22æ. q. 1 a. 10. dub. 2. Picus Mirand. in exposit. theorem. 4.

affirms it in express terms, that a pope is judicable and punishable in that case. But there is no wound but some empiric or other will pretend to cure it; and there is a cure for this too. For though it be true, that if a pope were a heretic, the Church might depose him,—yet no pope can be a heretic; not but that the man may, but the pope cannot, for he is 'ipso facto' no pope, for he is no Christian: so Bellarmine:[q] and so when you think you have him fast, he is gone, and nothing of the pope left. But who sees not the extreme folly of this evasion? For besides that out of fear and caution he grants more than he needs, more than was sought for in the question,—the pope hath no more privilege than the abbot of Cluny; for he cannot be a heretic, nor be deposed by a council: for if he be manifestly a heretic, he is 'ipso facto' no abbot, for he is no Christian; and if the pope be a heretic privately and occultly, for that he may be accused and judged, said the gloss upon the canon "Si Papa, dist. 40," and the abbot of Cluny and one of his meanest monks can be no more, therefore the case is all one. But this is fitter to make sport with, than to interrupt a serious discourse. And therefore, although the canon "Sancta Romana" approves all the decretals of popes, yet that very decretal hath not decreed it firm enough, but that they are so warily received by them, that when they list they are pleased to dissent from them. And it is evident in the Extravagant of Sixtus IV. "com. de reliquiis," who appointed a feast of the immaculate conception, a special office for the day, and indulgences enough to the observers of it: and yet the Dominicans were so far from believing the pope to be infallible,[r] and his decree authentic, that they declaimed against it in their pulpits so furiously and so long, till they were prohibited under pain of excommunication to say the Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin. Now what solemnity can be more required for the pope to make a cathedral determination of an article? The article was so concluded, that a feast

[q] Lib. ii. c. 30. ubi suprà. sect. est ergo.

[r] Vide Alphons. à Cast. lib. i. adv. Hæres. c. 4. hoc lemma ridentum affabre. Vide etiam Innocentium Ser. 2. de Consecrat. Pontif. act. 7. 8æ Synodi; et Concil. 5. sub Symmadio. Vide Collat. 8. can. 12. ubi patres judicialem sententiam p. Vigilii in causa trium Capitulorum damnârunt expressè. Extrav. comm. Extrav. grave, Tit. X. De Angelo Custod. fol. 59. de consecrat. dist. 3. can. pronunciand. gloss. verb. Nativ.

was instituted for its celebration, and pain of excommunication threatened to them which should preach the contrary: nothing more solemn, nothing more confident and severe. And yet after all this, to shew that whatsoever those people would have us to believe, they will believe what they list themselves, this thing was not determined 'de fide,' saith Victorellus: nay, the author of the gloss of the canon law hath these express words, "De festo conceptionis nihil dicitur, quia celebrandum non est, sicut in multis regionibus fit, et maxime in Anglia; et hæc est ratio, quia in peccatis concepta fuit, sicut et cæteri sancti." And the commissaries of Sixtus V. and Gregory XIII. did not expunge these words, but left them upon record, not only against a received and more approved opinion of the Jesuits and Franciscans, but also in plain defiance of a decree made by their visible head of the Church, who (if ever any thing was decreed by a pope with an intent to oblige all Christendom) decreed this to that purpose.[5]

16. So that, without taking particular notice of it, that egregious sophistry and flattery of the late writers of the Roman Church are, in this instance, besides divers others before mentioned, clearly made invalid. For here the bishop of Rome, not as a private doctor, but as pope, not by declaring his own opinion, but with an intent to oblige the Church, gave sentence in a question which the Dominicans will still account 'pro non determinata.' And every decretal recorded in the canon law, if it be false in the matter, is just such another instance. And Alphonsus à Castro says to the same purpose, in the instance of Cælestine dissolving marriages for heresy, "Neque Cælestini error talis fuit, qui soli negligentiæ imputari debeat; ità ut illum errâsse dicamus velut privatam personam, et non ut papam: quoniam hujusmodi Cælestini definitio habetur in antiquis decretalibus, in cap. 'Laudabilem,' titulo 'De Conversione Infidelium;' quam ego ipse vidi et legi." (Lib. i. adv. Hæres. cap. 4.) And therefore it is a most intolerable folly to pretend that the pope cannot err in his chair, though he may err in his closet, and may maintain a false opinion even to his death. For besides that it is sottish to think, that either he would not have the world of his own opinion (as all men naturally would); or that, if he were set

[5] Hâc in perpetuum valiturâ constitutione statuimus, &c. De reliquiis, &c. Extrav. Com. Sixt. 4. cap. 1.

in his chair, he would determine contrary to himself in his study: and therefore to represent it as possible, they are fain to fly to a miracle, for which they have no colour, neither instructions, nor insinuation, nor warrant, nor promise; besides that it were impious and unreasonable to depose him for heresy, who may so easily, even by setting himself in his chair and reviewing his theorems, be cured: it is also against a very great experience. For besides the former allegations, it is most notorious that Pope Alexander III. in a council at Rome, of three hundred archbishops and bishops, A.D. 1179, condemned Peter Lombard of heresy in a matter of great concernment, no less than something about the incarnation; from which sentence he was, after thirty-six years abiding it, absolved by Pope Innocent III., without repentance or dereliction of the opinion. Now if the sentence was not a cathedral dictate, as solemn and great as could be expected, or as is said to be necessary to oblige all Christendom, let the great hyperaspists of the Roman Church be judges, who tell us, that a particular council with the pope's confirmation is made œcumenical by adoption, and is infallible, and obliges all Christendom: so Bellarmine.[t] And therefore he says, that it is "temerarium, erroneum, et proximum hæresi," to deny it. But whether it be or not, it is all one as to my purpose. For, it is certain, that in a particular council confirmed by that pope, if ever, then and there the pope sat himself in his chair; and it is as certain that he sat beside the cushion, and determined ridiculously and falsely in this case. But this is a device for which there is no scripture, no tradition, no one dogmatical resolute saying of any father, Greek or Latin, for above one thousand years after Christ: and themselves, when they list, can acknowledge as much. And, therefore, Bellarmine's saying, I perceive, is believed of them to be true. That there are many things in the Decretal Epistles which make not articles to be 'de fide.'[u] And therefore, "Non est necessario credendum determinatis per summum pontificem," says Almain. And this serves their turns in every thing they do not like; and, therefore, I am resolved it shall serve my turn

[t] Lib. ii. de Concil. cap. 5.—De Pontif. Rom. c. 14. sect. respondeo. In 3. sent. d. 24. q. in cont. 6. dub. 6. in fine.

[u] Proverbialiter olim dictum erat de Decretalibus, Malè cum rebus humanis actum esse, ex quo Decretis alæ accesserunt; scil. cùm Decretales post Decretum Gratiani sub nomine Gregorii noni edebantur.

also for something, and that is, that the matter of the pope's infallibility is so ridiculous and improbable, that they do not believe it themselves. Some of them clearly practised the contrary: and although Pope Leo X. hath determined the pope to be above a council, yet the Sorbonne to this day scorn it at the very heart. And I might urge upon them that scorn that Almain[x] truly enough by way of argument alleges. It is a wonder that they who affirm the pope cannot err in judgment, do not also affirm that he cannot sin: they are like enough to say so, says he, if the vicious lives of the popes did not make a daily confutation of such flattery. Now, for my own particular, I am as confident, and think it as certain, that popes are actually deceived in matters of Christian doctrine, as that they do prevaricate the laws of Christian piety. And, therefore, Alphonsus[y] à Castro calls them 'impudentes papæ assentatores,' that ascribe to him infallibility in judgment or interpretation of Scripture.

17. But if themselves did believe it heartily, what excuse is there in the world for the strange uncharitableness or supine negligence of the popes, that they do not set themselves in their chair, and write infallible commentaries, and determine all controversies without error, and blast all heresies with the word of their mouth, declare what is and what is not 'de fide,' that his disciples and confidents may agree upon it, reconcile the Franciscans and Dominicans, and expound all mysteries? For it cannot be imagined but he that was endued with so supreme power, in order to so great ends, was also fitted with proportionable, that is, extraordinary, personal abilities, succeeding and derived upon the persons of all the popes. And then the doctors of his church need not trouble themselves with study, nor writing explications of Scripture, but might wholly attend to practical devotion, and leave all their scholastical wranglings, the distinguishing opinions of their orders, and they might have a fine church, something like fairy-land, or Lucian's kingdom in the moon. But if they say they cannot do this when they list, but when they are moved to it by the Spirit, then we are never the nearer: for so may the bishop of Angoulême write infallible

[x] De Autorit. Eccles. c. x. in fine.

[y] Lib. i. c. iv. advers. hæres. edit. Paris. 1534. In seqq. non expurgantur ista verba, at idem sensus manet.

commentaries, when the Holy Ghost moves him to it; for I suppose his motions are not ineffectual, but he will sufficiently assist us in performing of what he actually moves us to. But among so many hundred decrees which the popes of Rome have made, or confirmed and attested, (which is all one), I would fain know, in how many of them did the Holy Ghost assist them? If they know it, let them declare it, that it may be certain which of their decretals are 'de fide;' for as yet none of his own church knows. If they do not know, then neither can we know it from them, and then we are as uncertain as ever. And, besides, the Holy Ghost may possibly move him, and he, by his ignorance of it, may neglect so profitable a motion; and then his promise of infallible assistance will be to very little purpose, because it is with very much fallibility applicable to practice. And, therefore, it is absolutely useless to any man or any Church: because, suppose it settled 'in thesi,' that the pope is infallible; yet whether he will do his duty, and perform those conditions of being assisted which are required of him, or whether he be a secret simoniac (for, if he be, he is 'ipso facto' no pope), or whether he be a bishop, or priest, or a Christian, being all uncertain, every one of these depending upon the intention and power of the baptizer or ordainer, which also are fallible, because they depend upon the honesty and power of other men; we cannot be infallibly certain of any pope that he is infallible: and therefore, when our questions are determined, we are never the nearer, but may hug ourselves in an imaginary truth, the certainty of finding truth out depending upon so many fallible and contingent circumstances. And therefore the thing, if it were true, being so to no purpose, it is to be presumed that God never gave a power so impertinently, and from whence no benefit can accrue to the Christian Church, for whose use and benefit, if at all, it must needs have been appointed.

18. But I am too long in this impertinence. If I were bound to call any man master upon earth, and to believe him upon his own affirmative and authority, I would of all men least follow him that pretends he is infallible, and cannot prove it. For he that cannot prove it, makes me as uncertain as ever; and that he pretends to infallibility, makes him careless of using such means, which will morally secure those wise

persons, who, knowing their own aptness to be deceived, use what endeavours they can to secure themselves from error, and so become the better and more probable guides.

19. Well, thus far we are come: although we are secured in fundamental points from involuntary error by the plain, express, and dogmatical places of Scripture; yet in other things we are not, but may be invincibly mistaken, because of the obscurity and difficulty in the controverted parts of Scripture, by reason of the uncertainty of the means of its interpretation, since tradition is of an uncertain reputation, and sometimes evidently false; councils are contradictory to each other, and therefore certainly many of them are equally deceived, and therefore all may: and then the popes of Rome are very likely to mislead us, but cannot ascertain us of truth in matter of question; and in this world we believe in part, and prophesy in part, and this imperfection shall never be done away, till we be translated to a more glorious state: either then we must throw our chances, and get truth by accident or predestination; or else we must lie safe in a mutual toleration, and private liberty of persuasion, unless some other anchor can be thought upon, where we may fasten our floating vessels, and ride safely.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Disability of Fathers, or Writers Ecclesiastical, to determine our Questions with Certainty and Truth.

1. There are some that think they can determine all questions in the world by two or three sayings of the fathers, or by the consent of so many as they will please to call a concurrent testimony: but this consideration will soon be at an end. For if the fathers, when they are witnesses of tradition, do not always speak truth, as it happened in the case of Papias and his numerous followers for almost three ages together, then is their testimony more improbable, when they dispute or write commentaries.

2. The fathers of the first ages spake unitedly concerning divers questions of secret theology, and yet were afterward contradicted by one personage of great reputation, whose credit had so much influence upon the world, as to make the contrary opinion become popular: why then may not we

have the same liberty, when so plain an uncertainty is in their persuasions, and so great contrariety in their doctrines? But this is evident in the case of absolute predestination, which till St. Austin's time no man preached, but all taught the contrary; and yet the reputation of this one excellent man altered the scene. But if he might dissent from so general a doctrine, why may not we do so too (it being pretended that he is so excellent a precedent to be followed), if we have the same reason? He had no more authority nor dispensation to dissent than any bishop hath now. And, therefore, St. Austin hath dealt ingenuously; and as he took this liberty to himself, so he denies it not to others, but indeed forces them to preserve their own liberty. And therefore, when St. Jerome had a great mind to follow the fathers in a point that he fancied, and the best security he had was, "Patiaris me cum talibus errare," St. Austin would not endure it, but answered his reason, and neglected the authority. And therefore it had been most unreasonable that we should do that now, though in his behalf, which he towards greater personages (for so they were then) at that time judged to be unreasonable. It is a plain recession from antiquity which was determined by the Council of Florence,[z] "piorum animas purgatas," &c. "mox in cœlum recipi, et intueri clare ipsum Deum trinum et unum, sicuti est;" as who please to try, may see it dogmatically resolved to the contrary by Justin Martyr,[a] by Irenæus,[b] by Origen,[c] by St. Chrysostom,[d] Theodoret,[e] Arethas Cæsariensis,[f] Euthymius,[g] who may answer for the Greek Church. And it is plain, that it was the opinion of the Greek Church, by that great difficulty the Romans had, of bringing the Greeks to subscribe to the Florentine Council, where the Latins acted their masterpiece of wit and stratagem, the greatest that hath been till the famous and superpolitic design of Trent. And for the Latin Church, Tertullian,[h] St. Ambrose,[i] St. Austin,[k] St. Hilary,[l] Prudentius,[m] Lactantius,[n] Victorinus Martyr,[o] and St. Bernard,[p] are known to be

[z] Sess. ult. [a] Q. 60. ad Christian. [b] Lib. v.
[c] Hom. vii. in Levit. [d] Hom. xxxix. in 1 Cor. [e] In c. xi. ad Heb.
[f] In c. vi. Apoc. [g] In 16. c. Luc. [h] Lib. iv. adv. Marc.
[i] L. de Cain. c. 2. [k] Ep. 111. ad Fortunatian. [l] In Psal. cxxxviii.
[m] De exeq. defunctor. [n] Lib. vii. c. 21. [o] In c. vi. Apoc.
[p] Serm. 3. de omn. sanctis. Vide etiam S. Aug. in Enchir. c. 108; et lib. xii. de Civ. Dei, c. 9; et in Ps. xxxvi.; et in lib. i. Retract. c. 14. Vide insuper testimonia quæ col. Spalat. lib. v. c. 8. n. 98. de Repub. Eccl. et Sixt. Senens. lib. vi. annot. 345.

of opinion, that the souls of the saints are "in abditis receptaculis et exterioribus atriis," where they expect the resurrection of their bodies, and the glorification of their souls; and though they all believe them to be happy, yet they enjoy not the beatific vision before the resurrection. Now there being so full a consent of fathers (for many more may be added), and the decree of Pope John XXII. besides, who was so confident for his decree, that he commanded the University of Paris to swear that they would preach it and no other, and that none should be promoted to degrees in theology that did not swear the like, as Occham,[q] Gerson,[r] Marsilius,[s] and Adrianus,[t] report: since it is esteemed lawful to dissent from all these, I hope no man will be so unjust to press other men to consent to an authority which he himself judges to be incompetent. These two great instances are enough; but if more were necessary, I could instance in the opinion of the Chiliasts, maintained by the second and third centuries, and disavowed ever since: in the doctrine of communicating infants, taught and practised as necessary by the fourth and fifth centuries, and detested by the Latin Church in all the following ages: in the variety of opinions concerning the very form of baptism, some keeping close to the institution and the words of its first sanction, others affirming it to be sufficient if it be administered 'in nomine Christi;' particularly St. Ambrose, Pope Nicolas the First, Venerable Bede,[u] and St. Bernard,[x] besides some writers of after ages, as Hugo de Sancto Victore, and the doctors generally his contemporaries. And it would not be inconsiderable to observe, that if any synod, general, national, or provincial, be receded from by the Church of the later age (as there have been very many), then so many fathers, as were then assembled and united in opinion, are esteemed no authority to determine our persuasions. Now suppose two hundred fathers assembled in such a council, if they all had writ books, and two hundred authorities had been alleged in confirmation of an opinion,—it would have made a mighty noise, and loaded any man with an insupportable prejudice that should dissent: and yet every opinion, maintained against the authority of any one council though but provincial, is, in its proportion, such a

[q] In oper. 90. dierum.
[r] Serm. de Pasch.
[s] In 4. sent. q. 13. a. 3.
[t] In 4. de Sacram. confirmat.
[u] De Consecrat. dist. 4. c. á quodam Judæo. In c. x. Act.
[x] Ep. 340.

violent recession and neglect of the authority and doctrine of so many fathers as were then assembled, who did as much declare their opinion in those assemblies by their suffrages, as if they had writ it in so many books; and their opinion is more considerable in the assembly than in their writings, because it was more deliberate, assisted, united, and more dogmatical. In pursuance of this observation, it is to be noted, by way of instance, that St. Austin and two hundred and seventeen bishops, and all their successors,[y] for a whole age together, did consent in denying appeals to Rome; and yet the authority of so many fathers (all true catholics) is of no force now at Rome in this question: but if it be in a matter they like, one of these fathers alone is sufficient. The doctrine of St. Austin alone brought in the festival and veneration of the assumption of the Blessed Virgin; and the hard sentence passed at Rome upon unbaptized infants, and the Dominican opinion concerning predetermination, derived from him alone as from their original. So that if a father speaks for them, it is wonderful to see what tragedies are stirred up against them that dissent, as is to be seen in that excellent nothing of Campian's Ten Reasons. But if the fathers be against them, then "patres in quibusdam non leviter lapsi sunt," says Bellarmine;[z] and "constat quosdam ex præcipuis," it is certain the chiefest of them have foully erred. Nay, Posa, Salmeron, and Wadding, in the question of the immaculate conception, make no scruple to dissent from antiquity, to prefer new doctors before the old; and to justify themselves, bring instances in which the Church of Rome had determined against the fathers. And it is not excuse enough to say, that singly the fathers may err, but if they concur, they are certain testimony. For there is no question this day disputed by persons that are willing to be tried by the fathers, so generally attested on either side, as some points are which both sides dislike severally or conjunctly. And therefore it is not honest

[y] Vide Epist. Bonifacii II. apud Nicolinum, tom. ii. Concil. p. 544. et exemplar precum Eulalii apud eundem, ibid. p. 525. Qui anathematizat omnes decisores suos, qui in ea causa, Romæ se opponendo, rectæ fidei regulam prævaricati sunt; inter quos tamen fuit Augustinus, quem pro maledicto Cælestinus tacitè agnoscit, admittendo sc. exemplar precum. Vide Doctor. Mart. de jurisdict. part. iv. p. 273. et Erasm. annot. in Hieron. præfat. in Daniel.

[z] De Verbo Dei, lib. iii. c. 10. sect. Dices.

for either side to press the authority of the fathers as a concluding argument in matter of dispute, unless themselves will be content to submit in all things to the testimony of an equal number of them; which, I am certain, neither side will do.

3. If I should reckon all the particular reasons against the certainty of this topic, it would be more than needs as to this question, and therefore I will abstain from all disparagement of those worthy personages, who were excellent lights to their several dioceses and cures. And, therefore, I will not instance that Clemens Alexandrinus[a] taught that Christ felt no hunger or thirst, but ate only to make demonstration of the verity of his human nature; nor that St. Hilary taught that Christ, in his sufferings, had no sorrow; nor that Origen taught the pains of hell not to have an eternal duration; nor that St. Cyprian taught rebaptization; nor that Athenagoras condemned second marriages; nor that St. John Damascenus said Christ only prayed in appearance, not really and in truth: I will let them all rest in peace, and their memories in honour: for if I should inquire into the particular probations of this article, I must do to them as I should be forced to do now; if any man should say that the writings of the schoolmen were excellent argument and authority to determine men's persuasions, I must consider their writings, and observe their defailances, their contradictions, the weakness of their arguments, the misallegations of Scripture, their inconsequent deductions, their false opinions, and all the weaknesses of humanity, and the failings of their persons; which no good man is willing to do, unless he be compelled to it by a pretence that they are infallible; or that they are followed by men even into errors or impiety. And therefore, since there is enough in the former instances to cure any such mispersuasion and prejudice, I will not instance in the innumerable particularities that might persuade us to keep our liberty entire, or to use it discreetly. For it is not to be denied but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, "et probabile est, quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod sapientibus videtur:" If one wise man says a thing, it is an argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation, that is, proportionable to such an assent as the authority of a wise man can produce, and when there is nothing

[a] Strom. lib. iii. et vi.

against it that is greater; and so in proportion higher and higher, as more wise men (such as the old doctors were) do affirm it. But that which I complain of is, that we look upon wise men that lived long ago with so much veneration and mistake, that we reverence them, not for having been wise men, but that they lived long since. But when the question is concerning authority, there must be something to build it on; a Divine commandment, human sanction, excellence of spirit, and greatness of understanding, on which things all human authority is regularly built. But now if we had lived in their times (for so we must look upon them now, as they did, who without prejudice beheld them), I suppose we should then have beheld them, as we in England look on those prelates who are of great reputation for learning and sanctity: here only is the difference; when persons are living, their authority is depressed by their personal defailances, and the contrary interests of their contemporaries, which disband when they are dead, and leave their credit entire upon the reputation of those excellent books and monuments of learning and piety which are left behind. But beyond this, why the bishop of Hippo shall have greater authority than the bishop of the Canaries, 'cæteris paribus,' I understand not. For did they that lived (to instance) in St. Austin's time believe all that he wrote? If they did, they were much to blame; or else himself was to blame for retracting much of it a little before his death. And if, while he lived, his affirmative was no more authority than derives from the credit of one very wise man, against whom also very wise men were opposed, I know not why his authority should prevail further now; for there is nothing added to the strength of his reason since that time, but only that he hath been in great esteem with posterity. And if that be all, why the opinion of the following ages shall be of more force than the opinion of the first ages, against whom St. Austin, in many things, clearly did oppose himself, I see no reason. Or whether the first ages were against him or no, yet that he is approved by the following ages, is no better argument; for it makes his authority not be innate, but derived from the opinion of others, and so to be 'precaria,' and to depend upon others, who, if they should change their opinions (and such examples there have been many), then there were nothing

left to urge our consent to him, which, when it was at the best, was only this, because he had the good fortune to be believed by them that came after, he must be so still: and because it was no argument for the old doctors before him, this will not be very good in his behalf. The same I say of any company of them, I say not so of all of them, it is to no purpose to say it; for there is no question this day in contestation, in the explication of which all the old writers did consent. In the assignation of the canon of Scripture, they never did consent for six hundred years together; and then, by that time, the bishops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently upon that,—they fell out in twenty more: and except it be in the apostles' creed, and articles of such nature, there is nothing which may with any colour be called a consent, much less tradition universal.

4. But I will rather choose to shew the uncertainty of this topic by such an argument which was not in the fathers' power to help, such as makes no invasion upon their great reputation, which I desire should be preserved as sacred as it ought. For other things, let who please read M. Daillé 'du Vrai Usage des Pères:' but I shall only consider that the writings of the fathers have been so corrupted by the intermixture of heretics, so many false books put forth in their names, so many of their writings lost which would more clearly have explicated their sense, and at last an open profession made and a trade of making the fathers speak, not what themselves thought, but what other men pleased, that it is a great instance of God's providence and care of his Church, that we have so much good preserved in the writings which we receive from the fathers, and that all truth is not as clear gone as is the certainty of their great authority and reputation.

5. The publishing books with the inscription of great names began in St. Paul's time; for some had troubled the Church of Thessalonica with a false epistle in St. Paul's name, against the inconvenience of which he arms them in 2 Thess. ii. 1. And this increased daily in the Church. The Arians wrote an epistle to Constantine under the name of Athanasius,[a] and the Eutychians wrote against Cyril of Alexandria under the name of Theodoret; and of the age in which the seventh synod was kept, Erasmus reports, "Libris

[a] Apol. Athanas. ad Constant. Vide Baron. A.D. 553.

falso celebrium virorum titulo commendatis scatere omnia." It was then a public business, and a trick not more base than public: but it was more ancient than so; and it is memorable in the books attributed to St. Basil, containing thirty chapters 'de Spiritu Sancto,' whereof fifteen were plainly by another hand under the covert of St. Basil, as appears in the difference of the style, in the impertinent digressions, against the custom of that excellent man,—by some passages contradictory to others of St. Basil,—by citing Meletius as dead before him, who yet lived three years [b] after him,—and by the very frame and manner of the discourse: and yet it was so handsomely carried, and so well served the purposes of men, that it was indifferently quoted under the title of St. Basil by many, but without naming the number of chapters, and by St. John Damascenus in these words; "Basilius in opere triginta capitum de Spiritu Sancto ad Amphilochium;" [c] and to the same purpose, and in the number of twenty-seven and twenty-nine chapters, he is cited by [d] Photius, by Euthymius, by Burchard, by Zonaras, Balsamon, and Nicephorus. But for this, see more in Erasmus's preface upon this book of St. Basil. There is an epistle goes still under the name of St. Jerome 'ad Demetriadem virginem,' and is of great use in the question of predestination with its appendices; and yet a very learned man,[e] eight hundred years ago, did believe it to be written by a Pelagian, and undertakes to confute divers parts of it, as being high and confident Pelagianism, and written by Julianus, Episc. Eclanensis: but Gregorius Ariminensis [f] from St. Austin affirms it to have been written by Pelagius himself. I might instance in too many: there is not any one of the fathers who is esteemed author of any considerable number of books, that hath escaped untouched. But the abuse in this kind hath been so evident, that now if any interested person of any side be pressed with an authority very pregnant against him, he thinks to escape by accusing the edition, or the author, or the hands it passed through, or at last he therefore suspects it because it makes against him: both sides being resolved that they are in the right, the authorities that they admit,

[b] Vide Baron. in Annal.
[c] Lib. i. de Imag. orat. 1.
[d] Nomocan. tit. i. c. 3.
[e] V. Beda de gratia Christi adv. Julianum.
[f] Greg. Arim. in 2. sent. dist. 26. q. 1–3.

they will believe not to be against them ; and they which are too plainly against them, shall be no authorities. And, indeed, the whole world hath been so much abused, that every man thinks he hath reason to suspect whatsoever is against him, that is, what he pleaseth : which proceeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability, in such allegations.

6. But there is a worse mischief than this,—besides those very many which are not yet discovered,—which, like the pestilence, destroys in the dark, and grows into inconvenience more insensibly and more irremediably, and that is, corruption of particular places, by inserting words and altering them to contrary senses : a thing which the fathers of the sixth general synod complained of, concerning the Constitutions of St. Clement, "quibus jam olim ab iis, qui à fide aliena sentiunt, adulterina quædam, etiam à pietate aliena, introducta sunt, quæ divinorum nobis decretorum elegantem et venustam speciem obscurârunt."[g] And so also have his Recognitions, so have his epistles been used, if at least they were his at all ; particularly the fifth decretal epistle that goes under the name of St. Clement, in which community of wives is taught upon the authority of St. Luke, saying, the first Christians had all things common ;—if all things, then wives also, says the epistle : a forgery like to have been done by some Nicolaitan, or other impure person. There is an epistle of Cyril extant to Successus, bishop of Diocæsarea, in which he relates that he was asked by Budas, bishop of Emessa, whether he did approve of the epistle of Athanasius to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth ; and that his answer was, "Si hæc apud vos scripta non sint adultera : nam plura ex his ab hostibus ecclesiæ deprehenduntur esse depravata."[h] And this was done even while the authors themselves were alive : for so Dionysius of Corinth complained, that his writings were corrupted by heretics ; and Pope Leo, that his epistle to Flavianus was perverted by the Greeks. And in the synod of Constantinople before quoted (the sixth synod), Macarius and his disciples were convicted, "quod sanctorum testimonia aut truncârint aut depravârint."[i] Thus the third chapter of St. Cyprian's book 'de Unitate Ecclesiæ,' in the edition of

[g] Can. 2. [h] Euseb. lib. iv. c. 23.
[i] Act. 8. vide etiam synod. 7. act. 4.

Pamelius, suffered great alteration; these words—'primatus Petro datur'—wholly inserted, and these—'super cathedram Petri fundata est ecclesia:' and whereas it was before, 'super unum ædificat ecclesiam Christus,' that not being enough, they have made it 'super *illum* unum.' Now these additions are against the faith of all old copies before Minutius and Pamelius, and against Gratian, even after himself had been chastised by the Roman correctors, the commissaries of Gregory XIII. as is to be seen where these words are alleged; "Decret. c. 24. q. 1. can. Loquitur Dominus ad Petrum." So that we may say of Cyprian's works, as Pamelius himself said concerning his writings and the writings of others of the fathers, "Unde colligimus (saith he) Cypriani scripta, ut et aliorum veterum, à librariis variè fuisse interpolata."[k] But Gratian himself could do as fine a feat when he listed, or else somebody did it for him, and it was in this very question, their beloved article of the pope's supremacy; for "de Pœnit. dist. 1. c. Potest fieri," he quotes these words out of St. Ambrose, "Non habent Petri hæreditatem, qui non habent Petri sedem:" '*fidem*,' not '*sedem*,' it is in St. Ambrose; but this error was made authentic by being inserted into the code of the catholic Church. And, considering how little notice the clergy had of antiquity but what was transmitted to them by Gratian, it will be no great wonder that all this part of the world swallowed such a bole, and the opinion that was wrapped in it. But I need not instance in Gratian any further, but refer any one that desires to be satisfied concerning this collection of his to Augustinus, archbishop of Tarracon, 'in emendatione Gratiani,' where he shall find fopperies and corruptions good store noted by that learned man. But that the 'indices expurgatorii,' commanded by authority, and practised with public license, profess to alter and correct the sayings of the fathers, and to reconcile them to the catholic sense, by putting in and leaving out,—is so great an imposture, so unchristian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all books and all authors justly to be suspected.[l] For considering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as

[k] Annot. Cyprian. super Concil. Carthag. n. 1.

[l] Vide Ind. Expurg. Belg. in Bertram. et Flandr. Hispan. Portugal. Neopolitan. Romanum; Junium in præfat. ad Ind. Expurg. Belg. Hasenmullerum, p. 275. Withrington. Apolog. num. 449.

having had most of the copies in their own hands, together with an unsatisfiable desire of prevailing in their right or in their wrong, they have made an absolute destruction of this topic: and when the fathers speak Latin,[m] or breathe in a Roman diocese, although the providence of God does infinitely overrule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the monuments of antiquity there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which indeed is infinitely inconsiderable; yet our questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied, instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latins always complained of the Greeks for privately corrupting the ancient records both of councils and fathers,[n] and now the Latins make open profession not of *corrupting*, but of *correcting*, their writings (that is the word), and at the most is was but a human authority, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived; the whole matter is so unreasonable, that it is not worth a further disquisition. But if any one desires to inquire further, he may be satisfied in Erasmus, in Henry and Robert Stephens, in their prefaces before the editions of the Fathers, and their observations upon them; in Bellarm. "de Scrip. Eccl.;" in D. Reynolds "de Lib. Apoc.;" in Scaliger; and Robert Coke, of Leeds, in Yorkshire, in his book "de Censura Patrum."

SECTION IX.

Of the Incompetency of the Church, in its diffusive Capacity, to be Judge of Controversies; and the Impertinence of that Pretence of the Spirit.

1. And now, after all these considerations of the several topics, tradition, councils, popes, and ancient doctors of the Church, I suppose it will not be necessary to consider the authority of the Church apart. For the Church either speaks by tradition, or by a representative body in a council, by popes, or by the fathers: for the Church is not a chimera, not a shadow, but a company of men believing in Jesus

[m] Videat Lector Andream Christovium in Bello Jesuitico, et Joh. Reynolds in lib. de Idol. Rom.

[n] Vide Ep. Nicolai ad Michael. Imperat.

Christ; which men either speak by themselves immediately, or by their rulers, or by their proxies and representatives. Now I have considered it in all senses but in its diffusive capacity; in which capacity she cannot be supposed to be a judge of controversies, both because in that capacity she cannot teach us; as also, because if, by a judge, we mean all the Church diffused in all its parts and members, so there can be no controversy: for if all men be of that opinion, then there is no question contested; if they be not all of a mind, how can the whole diffusive catholic Church be pretended in defiance of any one article, where the diffusive Church being divided, part goes this way, and part another? But if it be said, the greatest part must carry it (besides that it is impossible for us to know which way the greatest part goes in many questions), it is not always true that the greater part is the best; sometimes the contrary is most certain; and it is often very probable, but it is always possible. And when paucity of followers was objected to Liberius, he gave this in answer, "There was a time, when but three children of the captivity resisted the king's decree."[o] And Athanasius wrote on purpose against those that did judge of truth by multitudes: and indeed it concerned him so to do, when he alone stood in the gap against the numerous armies of the Arians.[p]

2. But if there could, in this case, be any distinct consideration of the Church, yet to know which is the true church is so hard to be found out, that the greatest questions of Christendom are judged, before you can get to your judge; and then there is no need of him. For those questions which are concerning the judge of questions, must be determined before you can submit to his judgment; and if you can yourselves determine those great questions, which consist much in universalities, then also you may determine the particulars, as being of less difficulty. And he that considers how many notes there are given to know the true Church by, no less than fifteen by Bellarmine, and concerning every one of them almost, whether it be a certain note or no, there are very many questions and uncertainties; and when it is resolved which are the notes, there is more dispute about the application of these notes than of the πρωτοκρινόμενον;—will quickly be satisfied that he had better sit still

[o] Theod. lib. ii. c. 16. hist.

[p] Tom. ii.

than to go round about a difficult and troublesome passage, and at last get no further, but return to the place from whence he first set out. And there is one note amongst the rest, holiness of doctrine, that is, so as to have nothing false either in 'doctrina fidei' or 'morum' (for so Bellarmine explicates it), which supposes all your controversies judged before they can be tried by the authority of the Church; and when we have found out all true doctrine (for that is necessary to judge of the Church by, that, as St. Austin's counsel is "Ecclesiam in verbis Christi investigemus"), then we are bound to follow, because we judge it true, not because the Church hath said it: and this is to judge of the Church by her doctrine, not of the doctrine by the Church. And indeed it is the best and only way: but then how to judge of that doctrine will be afterward inquired into. In the meantime, the Church, that is, the governors of the churches, are to judge for themselves, and for all those who cannot judge for themselves. For others, they must know that their governors judge for them too, so as to keep them in peace and obedience, though not for the determination of their private persuasions. For the economy of the Church requires, that her authority be received by all her children. Now this authority is Divine in its original, for it derives immediately from Christ; but it is human in its ministration. We are to be led like men, not like beasts. A rule is prescribed for the guides themselves to follow, as we are to follow the guides: and although, in matters indeterminable or ambiguous, the presumption lies on behalf of the governors (for we do nothing for authority, if we suffer it not to weigh that part down of an indifference and a question which she chooses); yet if there be 'error manifestus,' as it often happens; or if the church governors themselves be rent into innumerable sects, as it is this day in Christendon;—then we are to be as wise as we can in choosing our guides, and then to follow so long as that reason remains, for which we first chose them. And even in that government, which was an immediate sanction of God, I mean the ecclesiastical government of the synagogue (where God hath consigned the high-priest's authority with a menace of death to them that should disobey, that all the world might know the meaning and extent of such precepts, and that there is a limit beyond which

they cannot command, and we ought not to obey), it came once to that pass, that if the priest had been obeyed in his conciliar decrees, the whole nation had been bound to believe the condemnation of our blessed Saviour to have been just; and at another time the apostles must no more have preached in the name of JESUS. But here was manifest error. And the case is the same to every man, that invincibly, and therefore innocently, believes it so. "Deo potiùs quàm hominibus," is our rule in such cases. For although every man is bound to follow his guide, unless he believes his guide to mislead him; yet when he sees reason against his guide, it is best to follow his reason: for though in this he may fall into error, yet he will escape the sin; he may do violence to truth, but never to his own conscience; and an honest error is better than a hypocritical profession of truth, or a violent luxation of the understanding; since, if he retains his honesty and simplicity, he cannot err in a matter of faith or absolute necessity: God's goodness hath secured all honest and careful persons from that; for other things, he must follow the best guides he can; and he cannot be obliged to follow better than God hath given him.

3. And there is yet another way pretended of infallible expositions of Scripture, and that is, by the Spirit. But of this I shall say no more, but that it is impertinent as to this question. For put the case, the Spirit is given to some men, enabling them to expound infallibly; yet, because this is but a private assistance, and cannot be proved to others, this infallible assistance may determine my own assent, but shall not enable me to prescribe to others; because it were unreasonable I should, unless I could prove to him that I have the Spirit, and so can secure him from being deceived if he relies upon me. In this case I may say as St. Paul, in the case of praying with the Spirit; "He verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified." So that let this pretence be as true as it will, it is sufficient that it cannot be of consideration in this question.

4. The result of all is this: since it is not reasonable to limit and prescribe to all men's understandings by any external rule in the interpretation of difficult places of Scripture, which is our rule;—since no man nor company of men

is secure from error, or can secure us that they are free from malice, interest, and design;—and since all the ways by which we usually are taught, as tradition, councils, decretals, &c. are very uncertain in the matter, in their authority, in their being legitimate and natural, and many of them certainly false, and nothing certain but the Divine authority of Scripture, in which all that is necessary is plain, and much of that that is not necessary is very obscure, intricate, and involved:—either we must set up our rest only upon articles of faith and plain places, and be incurious of other obscurer revelations (which is a duty for persons of private understandings, and of no public function); or if we will search further (to which in some measure the guides of others are obliged), it remains we inquire how men may determine themselves, so as to do their duty to God, and not to disserve the Church, that every such man may do what he is bound to in his personal capacity, and as he relates to the public as a public minister.

SECTION X.

Of the Authority of Reason; and that it, proceeding upon best Grounds, is the best Judge.

1. HERE then I consider, that although no man may be trusted to judge for all others, unless this person were infallible and authorized so to do, which no man nor no company of men is; yet every man may be trusted to judge for himself, I say, every man that can judge at all; as for others, they are to be saved as it pleaseth God: but others that can judge at all, must either choose their guides who shall judge for them, and then they oftentimes do the wisest, and always save themselves a labour, but then they choose too; or if they be persons of greater understanding, then they are to choose for themselves in particular what the others do in general, and by choosing their guide: and for this any man may be better trusted for himself, than any man can be for another. For in this case, his own interest is most concerned; and ability is not so necessary as honesty, which certainly every man will best preserve in his own case, and to himself,—and if he

does not, it is he that must smart for it; and it is not required of us not to be in error, but that we may endeavour to avoid it.

2. He that follows his guide so far as his reason goes along with him, or, which is all one, he that follows his own reason, not guided only by natural arguments, but by Divine revelation, and all other good means,—hath great advantages over him that gives himself wholly to follow any human guide whatsoever, because he follows all their reasons and his own too: he follows them till reason leaves them, or till it seems so to him, which is all one to his particular; for, by the confession of all sides, an erroneous conscience binds him, when a right guide does not bind him. But he that gives himself up wholly to a guide, is oftentimes (I mean, if he be a discerning person) forced to do violence to his own understanding, and to lose all the benefit of his own discretion, that he may reconcile his reason to his guide. And of this we see infinite inconveniences in the Church of Rome: for we find persons of great understanding oftentimes so amused with the authority of their church, that it is pity to see them sweat in answering some objections, which they know not how to do, but yet believe they must, because the Church hath said it. So that if they read, study, pray, search records, and use all the means of art and industry, in the pursuit of truth, it is not with a resolution to follow that which shall seem truth to them, but to confirm what before they did believe: and if any argument shall seem unanswerable against any article of their church, they are to take it for a temptation, not for an illumination, and they are to use it accordingly: which makes them make the devil to be the author of that which God's Spirit hath assisted them to find in the use of lawful means and the search of truth. And when the devil of falsehood is like to be cast out by God's Spirit, they say that it is through Beelzebub: which was one of the worst things that ever the Pharisees said or did. And was it not a plain stifling of the just and reasonable demands made by the emperor, by the kings of France and Spain, and by the ablest divines among them, which was used in the Council of Trent, when they demanded the restitution of priests to their liberty of marriage, the use of the chalice, the service in the vulgar tongue; and these things not only in pursuance of

truth, but for other great and good ends, even to take away an infinite scandal and a great schism? and yet when they themselves did profess it, and all the world knew these reasonable demands were denied merely upon a politic consideration, yet that these things should be framed into articles and decrees of faith, and they for ever after bound, not only not to desire the same things, but to think the contrary to be Divine truths; never was reason made more a slave or more useless. Must not all the world say, either they must be great hypocrites, or do great violence to their understanding, when they not only cease from their claim, but must also believe it to be unjust? If the use of their reason had not been restrained by the tyranny and imperiousness of their guide, what the emperor and the kings and their theologues would have done, they can best judge who consider the reasonableness of the demand, and the unreasonableness of the denial. But we see many wise men who, with their "optandum esse ut ecclesia licentiam daret," &c., proclaim to all the world, that in some things they consent and do not consent, and do not heartily believe what they are bound publicly to profess; and they themselves would clearly see a difference, if a contrary decree should be framed by the church; they would with an infinitely greater confidence rest themselves in other propositions than what they must believe as the case now stands; and they would find that the authority of a church is a prejudice, as often as a free and modest use of reason is a temptation.

3. God will have no man pressed with another's inconveniences in matters spiritual and intellectual, no man's salvation to depend upon another; and every tooth that eats sour grapes, shall be set on edge for itself, and for none else: and this is remarkable in that saying of God by the prophet; "If the prophet ceases to tell my people of their sins, and leads them into error, the people shall die in their sins, and the blood of them I will require at the hands of that prophet;"[q] meaning that God hath so set the prophets to guide us, that we also are to follow them by a voluntary assent, by an act of choice and election. For although accidentally and occasionally the sheep may perish by the shepherd's fault; yet that which hath the chiefest influence upon

[q] Ezek. xxxiii.

their final condition, is their own act and election: and therefore God hath so appointed guides to us, that if we perish, it may be accounted upon both our scores, upon our own and the guides' too, which says plainly, that although we are intrusted to our guides, yet we are intrusted to ourselves too. Our guides must direct us; and yet, if they fail, God hath not so left us to them, but he hath given us enough to ourselves to discover their failings, and our own duties in all things necessary. And for other things, we must do as well as we can. But it is best to follow our guides, if we know nothing better: but, if we do, it is better to follow the pillar of fire than a pillar of cloud, though both possibly may lead to Canaan. But then also it is possible, that it may be otherwise. But I am sure if I do my own best, then if it be best to follow a guide, and if it be also necessary, I shall be sure, by God's grace, and my own endeavour, to get to it: but if I, without a particular engagement of my own understanding, follow a guide, possibly I may be guilty of extreme negligence; or I may extinguish God's Spirit; or do violence to my own reason. And whether intrusting myself wholly with another be not a laying up my talent in a napkin, I am not so well assured: I am certain the other is not. And since another man's answering for me will not hinder but that I also shall answer for myself; as it concerns him to see he does not wilfully misguide me, so it concerns me to see that he shall not, if I can help it. If I cannot, it will not be required at my hands; whether it be his fault, or his invincible error, I shall be charged with neither.

4. This is no other than what is enjoined as a duty. For since God will be justified with a free obedience, and there is an obedience of understanding as well as of will and affection, it is of great concernment, as to be willing to believe whatever God says, so also to inquire diligently whether the will of God be so as is pretended. Even our acts of understanding are acts of choice: and therefore it is commanded as a duty, to 'search the Scriptures; to 'try the spirits whether they be of God or no;' 'of ourselves to be able to judge what is right;' 'to try all things, and to retain that which is best.'[r] "For he that resolves not to consider, resolves not

[r] Matt. xv. 10. John, v. 39. 1 John, iv. 1. Eph. v. 17. Luke, xxiv. 25. Rom. i. 28; iii. 11. Apoc. ii. 2. Acts, xvii. 11.

to be careful whether he have truth or no; and therefore hath an affection indifferent to truth or falsehood, which is all one as if he did choose amiss: and since when things are truly propounded, and made reasonable and intelligible, we cannot but assent, and then it is no thanks to us; we have no way to give our wills to God in matters of belief, but by our industry in searching it, and examining the grounds upon which the propounders build their dictates. And the not doing it is oftentimes a cause that God gives a man over εἰς νοῦν ἀδόκιμον,—'into a reprobate and undiscerning mind and understanding.'

5. And this very thing, though men will not understand it, is the perpetual practice of all men in the world, that can give a reasonable account of their faith. The very catholic Church itself is 'rationabilis et ubique diffusa,' saith Optatus; 'reasonable as well as diffused every where.'[s] For, take the proselytes of the Church of Rome, even in their greatest submission of understanding, they seem to themselves to follow their reason most of all. For if you tell them Scripture and tradition are their rules to follow, they will believe you when they know a reason for it; and if they take you upon your word, they have a reason for that too: either they believe you a learned man, or a good man, or that you can have no ends upon them, or something that is of an equal height to fit their understandings. If you tell them they must believe the Church, you must tell them why they are bound to it; and if you quote Scripture to prove it, you must give them leave to judge, whether the words alleged speak your sense or no, and therefore, to dissent, if they say no such thing. And although all men are not wise, and proceed discreetly, yet all make their choice some way or other. He that chooses to please his fancy, takes his choice as much as he that chooses prudently. And no man speaks more unreasonably than he that denies to men the use of their reason in choice of their religion. For that I may, by the way, remove the common prejudice, reason and authority are not things incompetent or repugnant, especially when the authority is infallible and supreme: for there is no greater reason in the world than to believe such an authority. But then we must consider whether every authority that pretends to be such, is

[s] Lib. iii.

so indeed. And therefore 'Deus dixit, ergo hoc verum est,' is the greatest demonstration in the world for things of this nature. But it is not so in human dictates, and yet reason and human authority are not enemies. For it is a good argument for us to follow such an opinion, because it is made sacred by the authority of councils and ecclesiastical tradition, and sometimes it is the best reason we have in a question, and then it is to be strictly followed: but there may also be, at other times, a reason greater than it that speaks against it, and then the authority must not carry it. But then the difference is not between reason and authority, but between this reason and that which is greater: for authority is a very good reason, and is to prevail, unless a stronger comes and disarms it, but then it must give place. So that in this question, by *reason* I do not mean a distinct topic, but a transcendent that runs through all topics: for reason, like logic, is instrument of all things else; and when revelation, and philosophy, and public experience, and all other grounds of probability or demonstration, have supplied us with matter, then reason does but make use of them: that is, in plain terms, there being so many ways of arguing, so many sects, such differing interests, such variety of authority, so many pretences, and so many false beliefs, it concerns every wise man to consider which is the best argument, which proposition relies upon the truest grounds. And if this were not his only way, why do men dispute and urge arguments? why do they cite councils and fathers? why do they allege Scripture and tradition, and this on all sides, and to contrary purposes? If we must judge, then we must use our reason; if we must not judge, why do they produce evidence? Let them leave disputing, and decree propositions magisterially; but then we may choose whether we will believe them or no: or if they say, we must believe them, they must prove it, and tell us why. And all these disputes concerning tradition, councils, fathers, &c. are not arguments against or besides reason, but contestations and pretences to the best arguments, and the most certain satisfaction of our reason. But, then, all these coming into question submit themselves to reason, that is, to be judged by human understanding, upon the best grounds and information it can receive. So that Scripture, tradition, councils, and fathers, are the evidence in a question,

but reason is the judge: that is, we being the persons that are to be persuaded, we must see that we be persuaded reasonably; and it is unreasonable to assent to a lesser evidence, when a greater and clearer is propounded. But of that every man for himself is to take cognizance, if he be able to judge; if he be not, he is not bound under the tie of necessity to know any thing of it: that what is necessary shall be certainly conveyed to him, God, that best can, will certainly take care for that; for if he does not, it becomes to be not necessary; or if it should still remain necessary, and he damned for not knowing it, and yet to know it be not in his power, then who can help it? there can be no further care in this business. In other things, there being no absolute and prime necessity, we are left to our liberty to judge that way that makes best demonstration of our piety and of our love to God and truth, not that way that is always the best argument of an excellent understanding; for this may be a blessing, but the other only is a duty.

6. And now that we are pitched upon that way, which is most natural and reasonable in determination of ourselves, rather than of questions, which are often indeterminable, since right reason, proceeding upon the best grounds it can, viz. of Divine revelation and human authority and probability, is our guide, 'stando in humanis;' and supposing the assistance of God's Spirit,—which he never denies them that fail not of their duty in all such things in which he requires truth and certainty—it remains that we consider how it comes to pass, that men are so much deceived in the use of their reason and choice of their religion, and that, in this account, we distinguish those accidents which make error innocent from those which make it become a heresy.

SECTION XI.

Of some Causes of Error in the Exercise of Reason, which are inculpate in themselves.

1. THEN I consider that there are a great many inculpable causes of error, which are arguments of human imperfections,

not convictions of a sin. And first, The variety of human understandings is so great, that what is plain and apparent to one, is difficult and obscure to another; one will observe a consequent from a common principle, and another from thence will conclude the quite contrary. When St. Peter saw the vision of the sheet let down with all sorts of beasts in it, and a voice saying, 'Surge, Petre, macta et manduca,' if he had not, by a particular assistance, been directed to the meaning of the Holy Ghost, possibly he might have had other apprehensions of the meaning of that vision; for to myself it seems naturally to speak nothing but the abolition of the Mosaical rights, and the restitution of us to that part of Christian liberty which consists in the promiscuous eating of meats: and yet, besides this, there want not some understandings in the world, to whom these words seem to give St. Peter a power to kill heretical princes. Methinks it is a strange understanding that makes such extractions; but Bozius and Baronius did so. But men may understand what they please, especially when they are to expound oracles. It was an argument of some wit, but of singularity of understanding, that happened in the great contestation between the missals of St. Ambrose and St. Gregory. The lot was thrown, and God made to be judge; so that he was tempted to a miracle, to answer a question which themselves might have ended without much trouble. The two missals were laid upon the altar, and the church-door shut and sealed. By the morrow matins they found St. Gregory's missal torn in pieces (saith the story), and thrown about the church; but St. Ambrose's opened and laid upon the altar in a posture of being read. If I had been to judge of the meaning of this miracle, I should have made no scruple to have said, it had been the will of God that the missal of St. Ambrose, which had been anciently used, and publicly tried and approved of, should still be read in the church; and that of Gregory let alone, it being torn by an angelical hand as an argument of its imperfection, or of the inconvenience of innovation. But yet they judged it otherwise; for by the tearing and scattering about, they thought it was meant it should be used over all the world, and that of St. Ambrose read only in the Church of Milan. I am more satisfied that the former was the true meaning, than I am of the truth of the story: but we must

suppose that. And now there might have been eternal disputings about the meaning of the miracle, and nothing left to determine, when two fancies are the litigants, and the contestations about probabilities 'hinc inde.' And I doubt not this was one cause of so great variety of opinions in the Primitive Church, when they proved their several opinions,—which were mysterious questions of Christian theology,—by testimonies out of the obscurer prophets, out of the Psalms and Canticles; as who please to observe their arguments of discourse, and actions of council, shall perceive they very much used to do. Now, although men's understandings be not equal, and that it is fit the best understandings should prevail; yet that will not satisfy the weaker understandings, because all men will not think that another understanding is better than his own, at least not in such a particular, in which with fancy he hath pleased himself. But commonly they that are least able, are most bold, and the more ignorant is the more confident: therefore it is but reason, if he would have another bear with him, he also should bear with another; and if he will not be prescribed to, neither let him prescribe to others. And there is the more reason in this, because such modesty is commonly to be desired of the more imperfect: for wise men know the ground of their persuasion, and have their confidence proportionable to their evidence; others have not, but overact their trifles. And therefore I said, it is but a reasonable demand, that they that have the least reason, should not be most imperious: and for others, it being reasonable enough, for all their great advantages upon other men, they will be soon persuaded to it. For although wise men might be bolder in respect of the persons of others less discerning; yet they know there are but few things so certain as to create much boldness and confidence of assertion. If they do not, they are not the men I take them for.

2. Secondly: when an action or opinion is commenced with zeal and piety against a known vice or a vicious person, commonly all the mistakes of its proceeding are made sacred by the holiness of the principle,—and so abuses the persuasions of good people, that they make it as a characteristic note to distinguish good persons from bad: and then whatever error is consecrated by this means, is therefore

made the more lasting, because it is accounted holy; and the persons are not easily accounted heretics, because they erred upon a pious principle. There is a memorable instance in one of the greatest questions of Christendom, viz. concerning images. For when Philippicus had espied the images of the six first synods upon the front of a church, he caused them to be pulled down: now he did it in hatred of the sixth synod; for he, being a Monothelite, stood condemned by that synod. The catholics that were zealous for the sixth synod, caused the images and representments to be put up again: and then sprung the question concerning the lawfulness of images in churches. Philippicus and his party strived, by suppressing images, to do disparagement to the sixth synod: the catholics, to preserve the honour of the sixth synod, would uphold images.[t] And then the question came to be changed, and they who were easy enough to be persuaded to pull down images, were overawed by a prejudice against the Monothelites; and the Monothelites strived to maintain the advantage they had got, by a just and pious pretence against images. The Monothelites would have secured their error by the advantage and consociation of a truth; and the other would rather defend a dubious and disputable error, than lose and let go a certain truth. And thus the case stood, and the successors of both parts were led invincibly. For when the heresy of the Monothelites disbanded (which it did in a while after), yet the opinion of the Iconoclasts, and the question of images, grew stronger. Yet since the Iconoclasts at the first were heretics, not for breaking images, but for denying the two wills of Christ, his Divine and his human; that they were called Iconoclasts was to distinguish their opinion in the question concerning the images; but that then Iconoclasts so easily had the reputation of heretics, was because of the other opinion, which was conjunct in their persons: which opinion men afterward did not easily distinguish in them, but took them for heretics in gross, and whatsoever they held, to be heretical. And thus upon this prejudice grew great advantages to the veneration of images; and the persons at first were much to be excused, because they were misguided by that which might have abused the

[t] Vide Paulum Diaconum.

best men. And if Epiphanius, who was as zealous against images in churches as Philippicus or Leo Isaurus, had but begun a public contestation, and engaged emperors to have made decrees against them, Christendom would have had other apprehensions of it than they had, when the Monothelites began it. For few men will endure a truth from the mouth of the devil; and if the person be suspected, so are his ways too. And it is a great subtilty of the devil, so to temper truth and falsehood in the same person, that truth may lose much of its reputation by its mixture with error, and the error may become more plausible by reason of its conjunction with truth. And this we see by too much experience; for we see many truths are blasted in their reputation, because persons, whom we think we hate upon just grounds of religion, have taught them. And it was plain enough in the case of Maldonat,[u] that said of an explication of a place of Scripture that it was most agreeable to antiquity; but because Calvin had so expounded it, he therefore chose a new one. This was malice. But when a prejudice works tacitly, undiscernibly, and irresistibly of the person wrought upon, the man is to be pitied, not condemned, though possibly his opinion deserves it highly. And therefore it hath been usual to discredit doctrines by the personal defailances of them that preach them, or with the disreputation of that sect that maintains them in conjunction with other perverse doctrines, Faustus the Manichee, in St. Austin,[x] glories much that in their religion God was worshipped purely and without images, St. Austin liked it well, for so it was in his too; but from hence Sanders concludes, that to pull down images in churches was the heresy of the Manichees.[y] The Jews endure no images; therefore Bellarmine makes it to be a piece of Judaism to oppose them.[z] He might as well have concluded against saying our prayers and church-music, that it is Judaical, because the Jews used it. And he would be loath to be served so himself: for he that had a mind to use such arguments, might, with much better probability, conclude against their sacrament of extreme unction, because when the miraculous healing was ceased, then they were not catholics, but heretics, that did transfer it to the use of dying

[u] In c. vi. Johan.
[x] Lib. xx. c. 3. cont. Faustum Man.
[y] Lib. i. c. ult. de Imagin.
[z] De Reliq. SS. lib. ii. c. 6. sect. Nicolaus.

persons, says Irenæus;[a] for so did the Valentinians. And indeed this argument is something better than I thought for at first, because it was, in Irenæus's time, reckoned amongst the heresies. But there are a sort of men that are even with them, and hate some good things which the Church of Rome teaches, because she who teaches so many errors, hath been the publisher, and is the practiser, of those things. I confess the thing is always unreasonable, but sometimes it is invincible and innocent; and then may serve to abate the fury of all such decretory sentences, as condemn all the world but their own disciples.

3. Thirdly; There are some opinions that have gone hand in hand with a blessing and a prosperous profession; and the good success of their defenders hath amused many good people, because they thought they heard God's voice where they saw God's hand, and therefore have rushed upon such opinions with great piety and as great mistaking. For where they once have entertained a fear of God, and apprehension of his so sensible declaration, such a fear produces scruple, and a scrupulous conscience is always to be pitied, because, though it is seldom wise, it is always pious. And this very thing hath prevailed so far upon the understandings even of wise men, that Bellarmine makes it a note of the true Church. Which opinion when it prevails is a ready way to make, that instead of martys, all men should prove heretics or apostates in persecution: for since men in misery are very suspicious, out of strong desires to find out the cause, that by removing it they may be relieved, they apprehend that to be it that is first presented to their fears; and then if ever truth be afflicted, she shall also be destroyed. I will say nothing in defiance of his fancy, although all the experience in the world says it is false, and that of all men Christians should least believe it to be true, to whom a perpetual cross is their certain expectation (and the argument is like the moon, for which no garment can be fit, it alters according to the success of human affairs, and in one age will serve a papist, and in another a protestant): yet when such an opinion does prevail upon timorous persons, the malignity of their error (if any be consequent to this fancy, and taken up upon the reputation of a prosperous heresy) is not to be considered simply and

[a] Lib. i. c. 8. adv. Hær.

nakedly, but abatement is to be made in a just proportion to that fear, and to that apprehension.

4. Fourthly; Education is so great and invincible a prejudice, that he who masters the inconvenience of it, is more to be commended than he can justly be blamed that complies with it. For men do not always call them principles which are the prime fountains of reason, from whence such consequents naturally flow as are to guide the actions and discourses of men; but they are principles which they are first taught, which they sucked in next to their milk, and by a proportion to those first principles they usually take their estimate of propositions. For whatsoever is taught to them at first they believe infinitely, for they know nothing to the contrary, they have had no other masters whose theorems might abate the strength of their first persuasions; and it is a great advantage in those cases to get possession; and before their first principles can be dislodged, they are made habitual and complexional, it is in their nature then to believe them; and this is helped forward very much by the advantage of love and veneration, which we have to the first parents of our persuasions. And we see it in the orders of regulars in the Church of Rome. That opinion which was the opinion of their patron or founder, or of some eminent personage of the institute, is enough to engage all the order to be of that opinion: and it is strange that all the Dominicans should be of one opinion in the matter of predetermination and immaculate conception, and all the Franciscans of the quite contrary, as if their understandings were formed in a different mould, and furnished with various principles by their very rule. Now this prejudice works by many principles; but how strongly they do possess the understanding, is visible in that great instance of the affection and perfect persuasion the weaker sort of people have to that, which they call the religion of their forefathers. You may as well charm a fever asleep with the noise of bells, as make any pretence of reason against that religion, which old men have entailed upon their heirs male so many generations till they can prescribe.[b] And the apostles found this to be most true in the extremest difficulty they met with to contest against the rites of Moses,

[b] Optimo rati ea quæ magno assensu recepta sunt, quorumque exempla multa sunt; nec ad rationem, sed ad similitudinem, vivimus.—*Sen.*

and the long superstition of the Gentiles, which they therefore thought fit to be retained, because they had done so formerly; "Pergentes non quò eundum est, sed quò itur:"[c] and all the blessings of this life which God gave them, they had in conjunction with their religion, and therefore they believed it was for their religion; and this persuasion was bound fast in them with ribs of iron: the apostles were forced to unloose the whole conjuncture of parts and principles in their understandings, before they could make them malleable and receptive of any impresses. But the observations and experience of all wise men can justify this truth. All that I shall say to the present purpose is this, that consideration is to be had to the weakness of persons, when they are prevailed upon by so innocent a prejudice: and when there cannot be arguments strong enough to overmaster a habitual persuasion bred with a man, nourished up with him, that always ate at his table, and lay in his bosom, he is not easily to be called heretic; for if he keeps the foundation of faith, other articles are not so clearly demonstrated on either side, but that a man may innocently be abused to the contrary. And therefore in this case to handle him charitably, is but to do him justice. And when an opinion 'in minoribus articulis' is entertained upon the title and stock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, since, upon no better stock nor stronger arguments, most men entertain their whole religion, even Christianity itself.

5. Fifthly; There are some persons of a different persuasion, who therefore are the rather to be tolerated; because the indirect practices and impostures of their adversaries have confirmed them, that those opinions which they disavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of God's appointment. For it is no unreasonable discourse to say, that God will not be served with a lie; for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to support all those truths which he hath commanded, and hath supplied every honest cause with enough for its maintenance, and to contest against its adversaries. And (but that they which use indirect arts, will not be willing to lose any of their unjust advantages, nor yet be charitable to those persons, whom either to gain or to undo they leave nothing unattempted)

[c] Vide Min. Fel. Octav.

the Church of Rome hath much reason not to be so decretory in her sentences against persons of a differing persuasion: for if their cause were entirely the cause of God, they have given wise people reason to suspect it, because some of them have gone to the devil to defend it. And if it be remembered what tragedies were stirred up against Luther, for saying the devil had taught him an argument against the mass; it will be of as great advantage against them, that they go to the devil for many arguments to support not only the mass, but the other distinguishing articles of their church. I instance in the notorious forging of miracles, and framing of false and ridiculous legends. For the former I need no other instances than what happened in the great contestation about the immaculate conception, when there were miracles brought on both sides to prove the contradictory parts: and though it be more than probable that both sides played the jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to be discovered, and the actors burnt at Berne. But this discovery happened by Providence; for the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of probability than the Franciscan, is clearly more consonant both to Scripture and all antiquity; and this part of it is acknowledged by the greatest patrons themselves, as Salmeron, Posa, and Wadding: yet because they played the knaves in a just question, and used false arts to maintain a true proposition, God Almighty, to shew that he will not be served by a lie, was pleased rather to discover the imposture in the right opinion than in the false, since nothing is more dishonourable to God than to offer a sin in sacrifice to him, and nothing more incongruous in the nature of the thing, than that truth and falsehood should support each other, or that true doctrine should live at the charges of a lie. And he that considers the arguments for each opinion, will easily conclude, that if God would not have truth confirmed by a lie, much less would he himself attest a lie with a true miracle. And by this ground it will easily follow, that the Franciscan party, although they had better luck than the Dominicans, yet had not more honesty, because their cause was worse, and therefore their arguments no whit the better. And although the argument drawn from miracles is good to attest a holy doctrine, which by its own worth will support itself after way is a little made by

miracles; yet of itself and by its own reputation it will not support any fabric: for instead of proving a doctrine to be true, it makes that the miracles themselves are suspected to be illusions, if they be pretended in behalf of a doctrine which we think we have reason to account false. And therefore the Jews did not believe Christ's doctrine for his miracles, but disbelieved the truth of his miracles, because they did not like his doctrine. And if the holiness of his doctrine, and the Spirit of God by inspirations and infusions, and by that which St. Peter calls "a surer word of prophecy," had not attested the divinity both of his person and his office, we should have wanted many degrees of confidence, which now we have upon the truth of Christian religion. But now since we are foretold by this "surer word of prophecy," that is, the prediction of Jesus Christ, that antichrist should come in all wonders, and signs, and lying miracles, and that the Church saw much of that already verified in Simon Magus, Apollonius, Tyaneus, and Manetho, and divers[d] heretics, it is now come to that pass, that the argument, in its best advantage, proves nothing so much as that the doctrine which it pretends to prove, is to be suspected; because it was foretold, that false doctrine should be obtruded under such pretences. But then when not only true miracles are an insufficient argument to prove a truth since the establishment of Christianity, but that the miracles themselves are false and spurious, it makes that doctrine, in whose defence they come, justly to be suspected; because they are a demonstration, that the interested persons use all means, leave nothing unattempted, to prove their propositions; but since they so fail as to bring nothing from God, but something from the devil, for its justification, it is a great sign that the doctrine is false, because we know the devil, unless it be against his will, does nothing to prove a true proposition that makes against him. And now then those persons who will endure no man of another opinion, might do well to remember how by their exorcisms, their devil's tricks at Lowdon, and the other side pretending to cure mad folks and persons bewitched, and the many discoveries of their juggling, they have given so much reason to their adversaries to suspect

[d] Vide Baron. A.D. 68. n. 22. Philostrat. lib. iv. p. 485. Compend. Ced. p. 202. Stapleton prompt. Moral. pars æstiva, p. 627.

their doctrine, that either they must not be ready to condemn their persons who are made suspicious by their indirect proceeding in attestation of that which they value so high as to call their religion; or else they must condemn themselves for making the scandal active and effectual.

6. As for false legends, it will be of the same consideration, because they are false testimonies of miracles that were never done; which differs only from the other as a lie in action; but of this we have witness enough in that decree of Pope Leo X., session the eleventh of the last Lateran Council, where he excommunicates all the forgers and inventors of visions and false miracles: which is a testimony that it was then a practice so public as to need a law for its suppression. And if any man shall doubt whether it were so or not, let him see the 'centum gravamina' of the princes of Germany, where it is highly complained of. But the extreme stupidity and sottishness of the inventors of lying stories is so great, as to give occasion to some persons to suspect the truth of all church-story;[e] witness the legend of Lombardy; of the author of which the bishop of the Canaries gives this testimony; "In illo enim libro miraculorum monstra sæpius quàm vera miracula legas. Hanc homo scripsit ferrei oris, plumbei cordis, animi certè parùm severi et prudentis." But I need not descend so low, for St. Gregory and Venerable Bede themselves reported miracles, for the authority of which they only had the report of the common people; and it is not certain that Jerome had so much in his stories of St. Paul and St. Anthony, and the fauns and the satyrs which appeared to them, and desired their prayers. But I shall only, by way of eminence, note what Sir Thomas More says in his epistle to Ruthal, the king's secretary, before the dialogue of Lucian 'Philopseudes;' that therefore he undertook the translation of that dialogue, to free the world from a superstition that crept in under the face and title of religion. For such lies, says he, are transmitted to us with such authority, that a certain impostor had persuaded St. Austin, that the very fable which Lucian scoffs and makes sport withal in that dialogue, was a real story, and acted in his own days.[f]

[e] Τὰ γὰρ μὴ εἰρημένα ἐκβιαζόμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἀβιάστως εἰρημένα ὑποπτεύεσθαι παρασκευάζουσιν. Isid. Pelus. Vide lib. xi. loc. Theol. cap. 6. Canus ibid.

[f] Viz. De duobus spuriis, altero decedente, altero in vitam redeunte post viginti

The epistle is worth the reading to this purpose; but he says this abuse grew to such a height, that scarce any life of any saint or martyr is truly related, but is full of lies and lying wonders; and some persons thought they served God, if they did honour to God's saints by inventing some prodigious story or miracle for their reputation. So that now it is no wonder if the most pious men are apt to believe, and the greatest historians are easy enough to report, such stories, which serving to a good end, are also consigned by the report of persons otherwise pious and prudent enough. I will not instance in Vincentius's Speculum,—Turonensis,—Thomas Cantipratanus, John Herolt,—Vitæ Patrum,—nor the revelations of St. Bridget, though confirmed by two popes, Martin V. and Boniface IX. Even the best and most deliberate amongst them, Lippoman, Surius, Lipsius, Bzovius, and Baronius, are so full of fables, that they cause great disreputation to the other monuments and records of antiquity, and yet do no advantage to the cause under which they serve and take pay. They do no good, and much hurt; but yet accidentally they may procure this advantage to charity, since they do none to faith, that since they have so abused the credit of story, that our confidences want much of that support we should receive from her records of antiquity,—yet the men that dissent and are scandalized by such proceedings, should be excused, if they should chance to be afraid of truth, that hath put on garments of imposture: and since much violence is done to the truth and certainty of their judging, let none be done to their liberty of judging; since they cannot meet a right guide, let them have a charitable judge. And since it is one very great argument against Simon Magus and against Mahomet, that we can prove their miracles to be impostures; it is much to be pitied if timorous and suspicious persons shall invincibly and honestly less apprehend a truth which they see conveyed by such a testimony, which we all use as an argument to reprove the Mahometan superstition.

7. Sixthly; Here also come in all the weaknesses and trifling prejudices, which operate not by their own strength,

dies; quam in aliis nominibus ridet Lucianus. Vide etiam argumentum Gilberti Cognati, in Annotat. in hunc Dialog. Vic. Palæot. de Sacra sindone, par. 1. Epist. ad Lector.

but by advantage taken from the weakness of some understandings. Some men, by a proverb or a common saying, are determined to the belief of a proposition, for which they have no argument better than such a proverbial sentence. And when divers of the common people in Jerusalem were ready to yield their understandings to the belief of the Messias, they were turned clearly from their apprehensions by that proverb, "Look and see, does any good thing come from Galilee?" and this, "When Christ comes, no man knows from whence he is?" but this man was known of what parents, of what city. And thus the weakness of their understanding was abused, and that made the argument too hard for them. And the whole seventh chapter of St. John's Gospel is a perpetual instance of the efficacy of such trifling prejudices, and the vanity and weakness of popular understandings. Some whole ages have been abused by a definition which being once received, as most commonly they are upon slight grounds, they are taken for certainties in any science respectively, and for principles; and upon their reputation men use to frame conclusions, which must be false or uncertain according as the definitions are. And he that hath observed any thing of the weaknesses of men, and the successions of groundless doctrines from age to age, and how seldom definitions which are put into systems, or that derive from the fathers, or are approved among schoolmen,—are examined by persons of the same interests, will bear me witness how many and great inconveniences press hard upon the persuasions of men, who are abused, and yet never consider who hurt them. Others, and they very many, are led by authority or examples of princes and great personages: "Numquis credit ex principibus?"[g] Some by the reputation of one learned man are carried into any persuasion whatsoever. And in the middle and later ages of the Church this was the more considerable, because the infinite ignorance of the clerks and the men of the long robe gave them over to be led by those few guides, which were marked to them by an eminence, much more than their ordinary; which also did the more amuse them, because most commonly they were fit for nothing but to admire what they understood not. Their learning then was some skill in the Master of the Sentences,

[g] John, vii.

in Aquinas or Scotus, whom they admired next to the most intelligent of angels: hence came opinions that made sects and divisions of names, Thomists, Scotists, Albertists, Nominals, Reals, and I know not what monsters of names; and whole families of the same opinion, the whole institute of an order being engaged to believe according to the opinion of some leading man of the same order, as if such an opinion were imposed upon them 'in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ.' But this inconvenience is greater when the principle of the mistake runs higher, when the opinion is derived from a primitive man and a saint; for then it often happens that what at first was but a plain innocent seduction, comes to be made sacred by the veneration, which is consequent to the person for having lived long ago; and then, because the person is also since canonized, the error is almost made eternal, and the cure desperate. These and the like prejudices, which are as various as the miseries of humanity or the variety of human understandings, are not absolute excuses, unless to some persons: but truly if they be to any, they are exemptions to all from being pressed with too peremptory a sentence against them; especially if we consider what leave is given to all men by the Church of Rome, to follow any one probable doctor in an opinion, which is contested against by many more. And as for the doctors of the other side, they being destitute of any pretences to an infallible medium to determine questions, must of necessity allow the same liberty to the people, to be as prudent as they can in the choice of a fallible guide; and when they have chosen, if they do follow him into error, the matter is not so inexpiable for being deceived in using the best guides we had, which guides, because themselves were abused, did also against their wills deceive me. So that this prejudice may the easier abuse us, because it is almost like a duty to follow the dictates of a probable doctor: or if it be overacted, or accidentally pass into an inconvenience, it is therefore to be excused because the principle was not ill, unless we judge by our event, not by the antecedent probability. Of such men as these it was said by St. Austin, "Cæteram turbam non intelligendi vivacitas, sed credendi simplicitas tutissimam facit."[h] And Gregory Nazianzen, Σώζει πολλάκις τὸν λαὸν τὸ ἀβασάνιστον. The common sort of

[h] Cont. Fund. c. iv. Orat. 21.

people are safe in their not inquiring, by their own industry, and in the simplicity of their understanding, relying upon the best guides they can get.

8. But this is of such a nature, in which as we may inculpably be deceived, so we may turn it into a vice or a design; and then the consequent errors will alter the property, and become heresies. There are some men that "have men's persons in admiration because of advantage," and some that have 'itching ears,' and 'heap up teachers to themselves.' In these and the like cases the authority of a person and the prejudices of a great reputation are not the excuse, but the fault; and a sin is so far from excusing an error, that error becomes a sin by reason of its relation to that sin as to its parent and principle.

SECTION XII.

Of the Innocence of Error in Opinion, in a Pious Person.

1. And, therefore, as there are so many innocent causes of error as there are weaknesses within, and harmless and unavoidable prejudices from without; so if ever error be procured by a vice it hath no excuse, but becomes such a crime, of so much malignity, as to have influence upon the effect and consequent, and by communication makes it become criminal. The apostles noted two such causes, 'covetousness' and 'ambition;' the former in them of the circumcision, and the latter in Diotrephes and Simon Magus: and there were some that were ἀγόμενοι ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις[1] they were of the long robe too, but they were the she-disciples, upon whose consciences some false apostles had influence by advantage of their wantonness: and thus the three principles of all sin become also the principles of heresy; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And in pursuance of these arts the devil hath not wanted fuel to set to work incendiaries in all ages of the Church. The bishops were always honourable, and most commonly had great revenues, and a bishoprick would satisfy the two designs

[1] 2 Tim. iii.

of covetousness and ambition; and this hath been the golden apple very often contended for, and very often the cause of great fires in the Church. "Thebulis, quia rejectus ab episcopatu Hierosolymitano, turbare cœpit ecclesiam," said Hegesippus in Eusebius. Tertullian turned Montanist in discontent for missing the bishopric of Carthage after Agrippinus; and so did Montanus himself for the same discontent, saith Nicephorus. Novatus would have been bishop of Rome; Donatus, of Carthage; Arius, of Alexandria; Aerius, of Sebastia; but they all missed, and therefore all of them vexed Christendom. And this was so common a thing, that oftentimes the threatening the Church with a schism or a heresy was a design to get a bishopric. And Socrates reports of Asterius, that he did frequent the conventicles of the Arians; "Nam episcopatum aliquem ambiebat." And setting aside the infirmities of men and their innocent prejudices, Epiphanius makes pride to be the only cause of heresies; ὕβρις καὶ πρόκρισις,—'pride and prejudice' cause them all, the one criminally, the other innocently. And, indeed, St. Paul[a] does almost make pride the only cause of heresies: his words cannot be expounded, unless it be at least the principal; εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ, and 'consents not to sound words, and the doctrine that is according to godliness,' τετύφωται, μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος, ἀλλὰ νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις καὶ λογομαχίας· ἐξ ὧν γίνεται φθόνος, ἔρις, βλασφημίαι, ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί.

2. The sum is this, if ever an opinion be begun with pride, or managed with impiety, or ends in a crime, the man turns heretic: but let the error be never so great, so it be not against an article of creed, if it be simple and hath no confederation with the personal iniquity of the man, the opinion is as innocent as the person, though, perhaps, as false as he is ignorant, and therefore shall burn, though he himself escape. But in these cases, and many more (for the causes of deception increase by all accidents, and weaknesses, and illusions), no man can give certain judgment upon the persons of men in particular, unless the matter of fact and crime be accident and notorious. The man cannot, by human judgment, be concluded a heretic, unless his opinion be an open recession from plain demonstrative Divine

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 4.

authority (which must needs be notorious, voluntary, vincible, and criminal); or that there be a palpable serving of an end accidental and extrinsical to the opinion.

3. But this latter is very hard to be discerned, because those accidental and adherent crimes which make the man a heretic, in questions not simply fundamental or of necessary practice, are actions so internal and spiritual, that cognizance can but seldom be taken of them. And therefore, to instance, though the opinion of purgatory be false, yet to believe it cannot be heresy, if a man be abused into the belief of it invincibly; because it is not a doctrine either fundamentally false or practically impious, it neither proceeds from the will, nor hath any immediate or direct influence upon choice and manners. And as for those other ends of upholding that opinion which possibly its patrons may have, as for the reputation of their church's infallibility, for the advantage of dirges, requiems, masses, monthly minds, anniversaries, and other offices for the dead, which usually are very profitable, rich, and easy; these things may possibly have sole influences upon their understanding, but whether they have or no, God only knows. If the proposition and article were true, these ends might justly be subordinate, and consistent with a true proposition. And there are some truths that are also profitable, as the necessity of maintenance to the clergy, the doctrine of restitution, giving alms, lending freely, remitting debts in cases of great necessity: and it would be but an ill argument that the preachers of these doctrines speak false, because possibly in these articles they may serve their own ends. For although Demetrius and the craftsmen were without excuse for resisting the preaching of St. Paul, because it was notorious they resisted the truth upon ground of profit and personal emoluments; and the matter was confessed by themselves; yet if the clergy should maintain their just rights and revenues, which by pious dedications and donatives were long since ascertained upon them, is it to be presumed, in order of law and charity, that this end is in the men subordinate to truth, because it is so in the thing itself, and that therefore no judgment in prejudice of these truths can be made from that observation?

4. But if 'aliunde' we are ascertained of the truth or

falsehood of a proposition respectively, yet the judgment of the personal ends of the men cannot ordinarily be certain and judicial, because most commonly the acts are private, and the purposes internal, and temporal ends may sometimes consist with truth; and whether the purposes of the men make these ends principal or subordinate, no man can judge: and be they how they will, yet they do not always prove that, when they are conjunct with error, the error was caused by these purposes and criminal intentions.

5. But in questions practical, the doctrine itself, and the person too, may with more ease be reproved, because matter of fact being evident, and nothing being so certain as the experiments of human affairs, and these being the immediate consequents of such doctrines, are with some more certainty of observation redargued than the speculative, whose judgment is of itself more difficult, more remote from matter and human observation, and with less curiosity and explicitness declared in Scripture, as being of less consequence and concernment in order to God and man's great end. In other things, which end in notion and ineffective contemplation, where neither the doctrine is malicious, nor the person apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God: and as there is no certainty of human judicature in this case, so it is to no purpose it should be judged. For if the person may be innocent with his error, and there is no rule whereby it can certainly be pronounced that he is actually criminal (as it happens in matters speculative); since the end of the commandment is love out of "a pure conscience, and faith unfeigned," and the commandment may obtain its end in a consistence with this simple speculative error; why should men trouble themselves with such opinions, so as to disturb the public charity, or the private confidence? Opinions and persons are just so to be judged as other matters and persons criminal. For no man can judge any thing else: it must be a crime, and it must be open, so as to take cognizance, and make true human judgment of it. And this is all I am to say concerning the causes of heresies, and of the distinguishing rules for guiding of our judgments towards others.

6. As for guiding our judgments, and the use of our reason in judging for ourselves, all that is to be said is

reducible to this one proposition: since errors are then made sins, when they are contrary to charity, or inconsistent with a good life and the honour of God, that judgment is the truest, or at least that opinion most innocent, that, 1. best promotes the reputation of God's glory; and, 2. is the best instrument of holy life. For in questions and interpretations of dispute, these two analogies are the best to make propositions, and conjectures, and determinations. Diligence and care in obtaining the best guides, and the most convenient assistances, prayer, and modesty of spirit, simplicity of purposes and intentions, humility and aptness to learn, and a peaceable disposition, are therefore necessary to finding out truths, because they are parts of good life, without which our truths will do us little advantage, and our errors can have no excuse. But with these dispositions, as he is sure to find out all that is necessary, so what truth he inculpably misses of, he is sure is therefore not necessary, because he could not find it, when he did his best and his most innocent endeavours. And this I say to secure the persons; because no rule can antecedently secure the proposition in matters disputable. For even in the proportions and explications of this rule, there is infinite variety of disputes: and when the dispute is concerning free-will, one party denies it, because he believes it magnifies the grace of God, that it works irresistibly; the other affirms it, because he believes it engages us upon greater care and piety of our endeavours. The one opinion thinks God reaps the glory of our good actions, the other thinks it charges our bad actions upon him. So in the question of merit, one part chooses his assertion, because he thinks it encourages us to do good works; the other believes it makes us proud, and therefore he rejects it. The first believes it increases piety; the second believes it increases spiritual presumption and vanity: the first thinks it magnifies God's justice; the other thinks it derogates from his mercy. Now then, since neither this nor any ground can secure a man from possibility of mistaking, we were infinitely miserable if it would not secure us from punishment, so long as we willingly consent not to a crime, and do our best endeavour to avoid an error. Only, by the way, let me observe, that since there are such great differences of apprehension concerning the consequents of an article, no man is to be

charged with the odious consequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine is, but the person is not, if he understands not such things to be consequent to his doctrine: for if he did, and then avows them, they are his direct opinions, and he stands as chargeable with them as with his first propositions: but if he disavows them, he would certainly rather quit his opinion than avow such errors or impieties which are pretended to be consequent to it, because every man knows, that can be no truth from whence falsehood naturally and immediately does derive; and he therefore believes his first proposition, because he believes it innocent of such errors as are charged upon it directly or consequently.

7. So that now, since no error, neither for itself nor its consequents, is to be charged as criminal upon a pious person: since no simple error is a sin, nor does condemn us before the throne of God; since he is so pitiful to our crimes, that he pardons many 'de toto et integro,' in all makes abatement for the violence of temptation, and the surprisal and invasion of our faculties, and therefore much less will demand of us an account for our weaknesses; and since the strongest understanding cannot pretend to such an immunity and exemption from the condition of men, as not to be deceived and confess its weakness: it remains we inquire what deportment is to be used towards persons of a differing persuasion, when we are, I do not say doubtful of a proposition, but, convinced that he that differs from us, is in error: for this was the first intention, and the last end, of this discourse.

SECTION XIII.

Of the Deportment to be used towards Persons disagreeing, and the Reasons why they are not to be punished with Death, &c.

1. For although every man may be deceived, yet some are right, and may know it too; for every man that may err, does not therefore certainly err; and if he errs because he recedes from his rule, then if he follows it he may do right; and if ever any man upon just grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right, and was sure of it too: and although

confidence is mistaken for a just persuasion many times, yet some men are confident, and have reason to be. Now when this happens, the question is, What deportment they are to use towards persons that disagree from them, and by consequence are in error?

2. First then, no Christian is to be put to death, dismembered, or otherwise directly persecuted, for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or blasphemy. If it plainly and apparently brings in a crime, and himself does act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is punishable according to its proportion or malignity. As if he preaches treason or sedition, his opinion is not his excuse, because it brings a crime; and a man is never the less traitor because he believes it lawful to commit treason: and a man is a murderer if he kills his brother unjustly, although he thinks he does God good service in it. Matters of fact are equally judicable, whether the principle of them be from within or from without. And if a man could pretend to innocence in being seditious, blasphemous, or perjured, by persuading himself it is lawful, there were as great a gate opened to all iniquity as will entertain all the pretences, the designs, the impostures, and disguises, of the world. And therefore God hath taken order, that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life shall be so clearly explicated, that without the crime of the man he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty. And therefore the apostles and primitive doctors made no scruple of condemning such persons for heretics, that did dogmatize a sin. He that teaches others to sin, is worse than he that commits the crime, whether he be tempted by his own interest, or encouraged by the other's doctrine. It was as bad in Basilides to teach it to be lawful to renounce faith and religion, and take all manner of oaths and covenants in time of persecution, as if himself had done so. Nay, it is as much worse as the mischief is more universal, or as a fountain is greater than a drop of water taken from it. He that writes treason in a book, or preaches sedition in a pulpit, and persuades it to the people, is the greatest traitor and incendiary, and his opinion there is the fountain of a sin; and therefore could not be entertained in his understanding upon weakness, or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot, from Scripture or Divine revelation, have any pretence to colour that so fairly as to seduce either a wise or an honest

man. If it rest there and goes no further, it is not cognoscible, and so scapes that way; but if it be published, and comes 'à stylo ad machæram' (as Tertullian's phrase is), then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in persuasion, and is just so punishable as is the crime that it persuades. Such were they of whom St. Paul complains, who "brought in damnable doctrines and lusts." St. Paul's "utinam abscindantur"[k] is just of them, take it in any sense of rigour and severity, so it be proportionable to the crime or criminal doctrine. Such were those of whom God spake; "If any prophet tempt to idolatry, saying, Let us go after other gods, he shall be slain."[l] But these do not come into this question: but the proposition is to be understood concerning questions disputable 'in materia intellectuali;' which also, for all that law of killing such false prophets, were permitted with impunity in the synagogue, as appears beyond exception in the great divisions and disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. I deny not but certain and known idolatry, or any other sort of practical impiety with its principiant doctrine, may be punished corporally, because it is no other but matter of fact; but no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themselves are not sins, are to be persecuted or punished by death or corporal inflictions. This is now to be proved.

3. Secondly: all the former discourse is sufficient argument, how easy it is for us in such matters to be deceived. So long as Christian religion was a simple profession of the articles of belief, and a hearty prosecution of the rules of good life, the fewness of the articles and the clearness of the rule was cause of the seldom prevarication. But when divinity is swelled up to so great a body, when the several questions which the peevishness and wantonness of sixteen ages have commenced, are concentred into one, and from all these questions something is drawn into the body of theology, till it hath ascended up to the greatness of a mountain, and the sum of divinity collected by Aquinas makes a volume as great as was that of Livy, mocked at in the epigram

Quem mea vix totum bibliotheca capit;

it is impossible for any industry to consider so many particulars in the infinite numbers of questions as are necessary to be considered, before we can, with certainty, determine any.

[k] Gal. v. [l] Deut. xiii.

And after all the considerations, which we can have in a whole age, we are not sure 'not to be deceived.' The obscurity of some questions, the nicety of some articles, the intricacy of some revelations, the variety of human understandings, the windings of logic, the tricks of adversaries, the subtilty of sophisters, the engagement of educations, personal affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinity of authorities, the vastness of some arguments, as consisting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the several degrees of probability, the difficulties of Scripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the opposition of all exterior arguments to each other, and their open contestation, the public violence done to authors and records, the private arts and supplantings, the falsifyings, the indefatigable industry of some men to abuse all understandings and all persuasions into their own opinions, these and thousands more, even all the difficulty of things, and all the weaknesses of man, and all the arts of the devil, have made it impossible for any man, in so great variety of matter, not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular.

4. Thirdly: from hence proceeds a danger which is consequent to this proceeding: for if we, who are so apt to be deceived, and so insecure in our resolution of questions disputable, should persecute a disagreeing person, we are not sure we do not fight against God. For if his proposition be true and persecuted, then, because all truth derives from God, this proceeding is against God, and therefore this is not to be done, upon Gamaliel's ground, 'lest peradventure we be found to fight against God;' of which, because we can have no security (at least) in this case, we have all the guilt of a doubtful or an uncertain conscience. For if there be no security in the thing, as I have largely proved, the conscience in such cases is as uncertain as the question is: and if it be not doubtful where it is uncertain, it is because the man is not wise, but as confident as ignorant; the first without reason, and the second without excuse. And it is very disproportionable for a man to persecute another certainly for a proposition, that, if he were wise, he would know it is not certain; at least the other person may innocently be uncertain of it. If he be killed, he is certainly killed; but if he be called heretic, it is not so certain that he is a heretic.

It were good, therefore, that proceedings were according to evidence, and the rivers not swell over the banks, nor a certain definitive sentence of death passed upon such persuasions, which cannot certainly be defined. And this argument is of so much the more force, because we see that the greatest persecutions that ever have been, were against truth, even against Christianity itself; and it was a prediction of our blessed Saviour, that persecution should be the lot of true believers. And if we compute the experience of suffering Christendom, and the prediction that truth should suffer, with those few instances of suffering heretics, it is odds but persecution is on the wrong side, and that it is error and heresy, that is, cruel and tyrannical; especially since the truth of Jesus Christ and of his religion is so meek, so charitable, and so merciful. And we may in this case exactly use the words of St. Paul; "But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now:" and so ever will it be till Christ's second coming.

5. Fourthly: whoever persecutes a disagreeing person, arms all the world against himself, and all pious people of his own persuasion,[m] when the scales of authority return to his adversary, and attest his contradictory; and then what can he urge for mercy for himself or his party, that sheweth none to others? If he says that he is to be spared because he believes true, but the other was justly persecuted because he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is as confidently believed to be a heretic, as he believes his adversary such; and 'whether he be or no' being the thing in question, of this he is not to be his own judge: but he that hath authority on his side, will be sure to judge against him. So that, what either side can indifferently make use of, it is good that neither would, because neither side can with reason sufficiently do it in prejudice of the other. If a man will say, that every man must take his adventure, and if it happens authority to be with him, he will persecute his adversaries, and if it turns against him, he will bear it as well as he can, and hope for a reward of martyrdom and innocent suffering;—besides that this is so equal

[m] Quo comperto illi in nostram perniciem licentiore audaciâ grassabuntur. St. Aug. ep. ad Donat. Procons. et contr. ep. Fund. Ità nunc debeo sustinere et tantâ patientiâ vobiscum agere, quantâ mecum egerunt proximi mei, cùm in vestro dogmate rabiosus ac cæcus errarem.

to be said of all sides, and besides that this is a way to make an eternal disunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Christendom nothing but a shambles and a perpetual butchery; and as fast as men's wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abused, so often there will be new executions and massacres; besides all this, it is most unreasonable and unjust, as being contrariant to those laws of justice and charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeal to spare and preserve an innocent than to condemn a guilty person, and there is less malice and iniquity in sparing the guilty than in condemning the good: because it is in the power of men to remit a guilty person to Divine judicature, and for divers causes not to use severity; but in no case it is lawful; neither hath God at all given to man a power to condemn such persons as cannot be proved other than pious and innocent. And therefore it is better, if it should so happen, that we should spare the innocent person, and one that is actually deceived, than that, upon the turn of the wheel, the true believers should be destroyed.

6. And this very reason he, that had authority sufficient and absolute to make laws, was pleased to urge as a reasonable inducement for the establishing of that law which he made for the indemnity of erring persons. It was in the parable of the tares mingled with the good seed 'in agro dominico.' The good seed (Christ himself being the interpreter) are the children of the kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one: upon this comes the precept, "Gather not the tares by themselves, but let them both grow together till the harvest," that is, till the day of judgment. This parable hath been tortured infinitely to make it confess its meaning, but we shall soon despatch it. All the difficulty and variety of exposition are reducible to these two questions, What is meant by 'Gather not,' and what by 'Tares;' that is, what kind of sword is forbidden, and what kind of persons is to be tolerated? The former is clear; for the spiritual sword is not forbidden to be used to any sort of criminals, for that would destroy the power of excommunication. The prohibition therefore lies against the use of the temporal sword, in cutting off some persons. Who they are, is the next difficulty. But by 'tares,' or the 'children of the wicked one,' are meant either persons of ill lives, wicked persons

only 'in re practica;' or else another kind of evil persons, men criminal or faulty 'in re intellectuali.' One or other of these two must be meant; a third I know not. But the former cannot be meant, because it would destroy all bodies politic, which cannot consist without laws, nor laws without a compulsory and a power of the sword: therefore if criminals were to be let alone till the day of judgment, bodies politic must stand or fall 'ad arbitrium impiorum,' and nothing good could be protected, not innocence itself; nothing could be secured but violence and tyranny. It follows then, that since a kind of persons which are indeed faulty, are to be tolerated, it must be meant of persons faulty in another kind, in which the Gospel had not, in other places, clearly established a power externally compulsory: and therefore since in all actions practically criminal a power of the sword is permitted, here, where it is denied, must be meant a crime of another kind, and by consequence errors intellectual, commonly called heresy.

7. And after all this, the reason there given confirms this interpretation;[n] for therefore it is forbidden to cut off these tares, "lest we also pull up the wheat with them:" which is the sum of these two last arguments. For because heresy is of so nice consideration and difficult sentence, in thinking to root up heresies we may by our mistakes destroy true doctrine:[o] which although it be possible to be done in all cases of practical question by mistake; yet because external actions are more discernible than inward speculations and opinions, innocent persons are not so easily mistaken for the guilty in actions criminal, as in matters of inward persuasion. And upon that very reason St. Martin was zealous to have procured a revocation of a commission granted to certain tribunes to make inquiry in Spain for sects and opinions; for under colour of rooting out the Priscillianists, there was much mischief done, and more likely to happen, to the orthodox. For it happened then as oftentimes since, "Pallore potiùs et veste quàm fide hæreticus dijudicari solebat aliquando per tribunos Maximi." They were no good inquisitors of heretical pravity, so Sulpitius witnesses. But, secondly, the reason

[n] Vide St. Chrysost. Homil. xlvii. in cap. xiii. Matt. et St. August. Quæst. in cap. xiii. Matt. St. Cyprian. Ep. lib. iii. Ep. 1. Theophyl. in xiii. Matt.

[o] St. Hieron. in cap. xiii. Matt. ait per hanc parabolam significari, ne in rebus dubiis præceps fiat judicium.

says, that therefore these persons are so to be permitted as not to be persecuted, lest when a revolution of human affairs sets contrary opinions in the throne or chair, they who were persecuted before, should now themselves become persecutors of others; and so, at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be persecuted. But as these reasons confirm the law and this sense of it; so, abstracting from the law, it is of itself concluding by an argument 'ab incommodo,' and that founded upon the principles of justice and right reason, as I formerly alleged.

8. Fifthly: we are not only uncertain of finding out truths in matters disputable, but we are certain that the best and ablest doctors[p] of Christendom have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment; which thing is evident in all those instances of persons, from whose doctrine all sorts of Christians respectively take liberty to dissent. The errors of Papias, Irenæus, Lactantius, Justin Martyr in the millenary opinion, of St. Cyprian, Firmilian, the Asian and African fathers in the question of rebaptization, St. Austin in his decretory and uncharitable sentence against the unbaptized children of Christian parents, the Roman or the Greek doctors in the question of the procession of the Holy Ghost, and in the matter of images, are examples beyond exception. Ἀμφὶ δ' ἀνδρώπων φρεσὶν Ἀμπλακίαι ἀναρίθμητοι κρέμανται. Now if these great personages had been persecuted or destroyed for their opinions, who should have answered the invaluable loss the Church of God should have sustained in missing so excellent, so exemplary, and so great lights? But then if these persons erred, and by consequence might have been destroyed, what should have become of others whose understanding was lower, and their security less, their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate all men should have passed through the fire: for who can escape, when St. Cyprian and St. Austin cannot? Now to say these persons were not to be persecuted, because although they had errors, yet none condemned by the Church at that time or before, is

[p] Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur, et quàm difficilè caveantur errores. Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quàm rarum et arduum sit carnalia phantasmata piæ mentis serenitate superare. Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quibus et suspiriis et gemitibus fiat, ut ex quantulacunque parte possit intelligi Deus. Postremò, illi in vos sæviant, qui nullo tali errore decepti sunt, quali vos deceptos vident.—*St. August. Con. Ep. Fund.*

to say nothing to the purpose, nor nothing that is true. Not true; because St. Cyprian's error was condemned by Pope Stephen, which, in the present sense of the prevailing party in the Church of Rome is to be condemned by the Church. Not to the purpose? because it is nothing else but to say, that the Church did tolerate their errors. For since those opinions were open and manifest to the world, that the Church did not condemn them, it was either because those opinions were by the Church not thought to be errors; or if they were, yet she thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring person. And if she would do so still, it would in most cases be better than now it is. And yet if the Church had condemned them, it had not altered the case as to this question; for either the persons upon the condemnation of their error should have been persecuted, or not. If not, why shall they now, against the instance and precedent of those ages who were confessedly wise and pious, and whose practices are often made to us arguments to follow? If yea, and that they had been persecuted, it is a thing which this argument condemns, and the loss of the Church had been invaluable in the losing or the provocation and temptation of such rare personages; and the example and the rule of so ill consequence, that all persons might upon the same ground have suffered; and though some had escaped, yet no man could have any more security from punishment than from error.

9. Sixthly: either the disagreeing person is in error, or not, but a true believer: in either of the cases to persecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true believer, then it is a clear case that we do open violence to God, and his servants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and stupidity than to give to error the glory of martyrdom, and the advantages which are accidentally consequent to a persecution? For as it was true of the martyrs, 'Quoties morimur, toties nascimur,' the increase of their trouble was the increase of their confidence and the establishment of their persuasions; so it is in all false opinions? for that an opinion is true or false, is extrinsical or accidental to the consequents and advantages it gets by being afflicted. And there is a popular pity that follows all persons in misery, and that compassion breeds likeness of affections, and that very often produces likeness of persuasion; and so much the

rather, because there arises a jealousy and pregnant suspicion that they who persecute an opinion, are destitute of sufficient arguments to confute it, and that the hangman is the best disputant. For if those arguments which they have for their own doctrine were a sufficient ground of confidence and persuasion, men would be more willing to use those means and arguments which are better compliances with human understanding, which more naturally do satisfy it, which are more humane and Christian, than that way is which satisfies none, which destroys many, which provokes more, and which makes all men jealous. To which add, that those who die for their opinion, leave in all men great arguments of the heartiness of their belief, of the confidence of their persuasion, of the piety and innocence of their persons, of the purity of their intention and simplicity of purposes, that they are persons totally disinterested and separate from design. For no interest can be so great as to be put in balance against a man's life and his soul; and he does very imprudently serve his ends, who, seeingly and foreknowingly, loses his life in the prosecution of them. Just as if Titius should offer to die for Sempronius upon condition he might receive twenty talents when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great sincerity, and a great hope, when a man lays down his life in attestation of a proposition. "Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life," saith our blessed Saviour. And although laying of a wager is an argument of confidence more than truth; yet laying such a wager, staking of a man's soul and pawning his life, give a hearty testimony that the person is honest, confident, resigned, charitable, and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a person or a cause more advantages than these can do to an error. And, therefore, besides the impiety, there is great imprudence in canonizing a heretic, and consecrating an error by such means, which were better preserved as encouragements of truth and comforts to real and true martyrs. And it is not amiss to observe, that this very advantage was given by heretics, who were ready to shew and boast their catalogues of martyrs: in particular the Circumcellians did so, and the Donatists; and yet the first were heretics, the second schismatics. And it was remarkable in the scholars of Priscillian, who as they

had their master in the reputation of a saint while he was living, so when he was dead they had him in veneration as a martyr; they with reverence and devotion carried his and the bodies of his slain companions to an honourable sepulture, and counted it religion to swear by the name of Priscillian. So that the extinguishing of the person gives life and credit to his doctrine, and when he is dead, he yet speaks more effectually.

10. Seventhly: it is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for understanding, being a thing wholly spiritual, cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished, by corporal afflictions. It is 'in aliena republica,' a matter of another world. You may as well cure the cholic by brushing a man's clothes, or fill a man's belly with a syllogism. These things do not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action nor passion. And since all punishments in a prudent government punish the offender to prevent a future crime, and so it proves more medicinal than vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention; and since no punishment of the body can cure a disease in the soul; it is disproportionable in nature, and in all civil government, to punish where the punishment can do no good. It may be an act of tyranny, but never of justice. For is an opinion ever the more true or false for being persecuted? Some men have believed it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and vexed into a resolution; but the thing itself is not the truer: and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his understanding; for such premises can infer no conclusion but that of a man's life: and a wolf may as well give laws to the understanding, as he whose dictates are only propounded in violence, and writ in blood: and a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor discourse in his choice, nor reason to satisfy his discourse. And as it is unnatural, so it is unreasonable, that Sempronius should force Caius to be of his opinion, because Sempronius is consul this year and commands the lictors. As if he that can kill a man, cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why should I do violence to my conscience, because he can do violence to my person?

11. Eighthly: Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his

opinion when he will, or be satisfied in his reason that his opinion is false, because discountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he lists, he might cure many inconveniences of his life: all his fears and his sorrows would soon disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is persuaded that such an accident that afflicts him is an evil, and such an object formidable: let him but believe himself impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his steps need to be disturbed, nor his quietness discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him a hypocrite, but never to be a right believer; and so, instead of erecting a trophy to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil. Infinite examples are recorded in church-story to this very purpose. But Socrates instances in one for all: for when Eleusius, bishop of Cyzicum, was threatened by the Emperor Valens with banishment and confiscation, if he did not subscribe to the decree of Ariminum,—at last he yielded to the Arian opinion, and presently fell into great torment of conscience, openly at Cyzicum recanted the error, asked God and the Church forgiveness, and complained of the emperor's injustice: and that was all the good the Arian party got by offering violence to his conscience. And so many families in Spain, which are (as they call them) new Christians, and of a suspected faith, into which they were forced by the tyranny of the Inquisition, and yet are secret Moors, are evidence enough of the[q] inconvenience of preaching a doctrine 'in ore gladii cruentandi.' For it either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or forces him into a bad; it either punishes sincerity, or persuades hypocrisy; it persecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to dissemble and to be safe, but never to be honest.

12. Ninthly: it is one of the glories of Christian religion, that it was so pious, excellent, miraculous, and persuasive, that it came in upon its own piety and wisdom, with no other

[q] Ejusmodi fuit Hipponensium conversio, cujus quidem species decepit August. ità ut opinaretur hæreticos, licèt non morte trucidandos, vi tamen coercendos. Experientia enim demonstravit eos tam facilè ad Arianismum transiisse atque ad catholicismum, cùm Ariani principes rerum in ea civitate potirentur.

force but a torrent of arguments and demonstration of the Spirit; a mighty rushing wind to beat down all strongholds, and every high thought and imagination; but towards the persons of men it was always full of meekness and charity, compliance and toleration, condescension and bearing with one another, "restoring persons overtaken with an error, in the spirit of meekness, considering lest we also be tempted." The consideration is as prudent, and the proposition as just, as the precept is charitable, and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are best conserved with that which gives it the first being, and which is agreeable to its temper and constitution. That precept which it chiefly preaches in order to all the blessedness in the world, that is of meekness, mercy, and charity, should also preserve itself and promote its own interest. For indeed nothing will do it so well, nothing doth so excellently insinuate itself into the understandings and affections of men, as when the actions and persuasions of a sect, and every part, and principle, and promotion, are univocal. And it would be a mighty disparagement to so glorious an institution, that in its principle it should be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it so inhuman: and it would be improbable and unreasonable that the sword should be used in the persuasion of one proposition, and yet in the persuasion of the whole religion nothing like it. To do so may serve the end of a temporal prince, but never promote the honour of Christ's kingdom; it may secure a design of Spain, but will very much disserve Christendom, to offer to support it by that which good men believe to be a distinctive cognizance of the Mahometan religion from the excellence and piety of Christianity, whose sense and spirit are described in those excellent words of St. Paul; "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth."[r] They that oppose themselves must not be stricken by any of God's servants; and if yet any man will smite these who are his opposites in opinion, he will get nothing by that, he must quit the title of being a 'servant of God' for his pains.

[r] 2 Tim. ii. 24.

And I think a distinction of persons secular and ecclesiastical will do no advantage for an escape, because even the secular power, if it be Christian, and a servant of God, must not be πληκτικός· Δοῦλον Κυρίου οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι· I mean in those cases where meekness of instruction is the remedy; or if the case be irremediable, abscission by censures is the penalty.

13. Tenthly: and if yet in the nature of the thing it were neither unjust nor unreasonable, yet there is nothing under God Almighty, that hath power over the soul of man, so as to command a persuasion, or to judge a disagreeing. Human positive laws direct all external acts in order to several ends, and the judges take cognizance accordingly; but no man can command the will, or punish him that obeys the law against his will: for because its end is served in external obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be served by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet possibly the understanding is less subject to human power than the will: for that human power hath a command over external acts, which naturally and regularly flow from the will, 'et ut plurimùm' suppose a direct act of will, but always either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidental; but the understanding is a natural faculty subject to no command, but where the command is itself a reason fit to satisfy and persuade it. And therefore God, commanding us to believe such revelations, persuades and satisfies the understanding by his commanding and revealing: for there is no greater probation in the world that a proposition is true, than because God hath commanded us to believe it. But because no man's command is a satisfaction to the understanding, or a verification of the proposition, therefore the understanding is not subject to human authority. They may persuade, but not enjoin where God hath not; and where God hath, if it appears so to him, he is an infidel if he does not believe it. And if all men have no other efficacy or authority on the understanding but by persuasion, proposal, and entreaty, then a man is bound to assent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energy of persuasion; neither indeed can he, though he would never so fain: and he that out of fear, and too much compliance, and desire to be safe, shall desire to bring his understanding with some luxation to the belief

of human dictates and authorities, may as often miss of the truth as hit it, but is sure always to lose the comfort of truth, because he believes it upon indirect, insufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his desire it should be so is its best argument that it is so, so the pleasing of men is his best reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted, all the possession of a truth.

SECTION XIV.

Of the Practice of Christian Churches towards Persons disagreeing, and when Persecution first came in.

And thus this truth hath been practised in all times of Christian religion, when there were no collateral designs on foot, nor interests to be served, nor passions to be satisfied. In St. Paul's time, though the censure of heresy were not so loose and forward as afterward, and all that were called heretics, were clearly such and highly criminal, yet as their crime was so was their censure, that is, spiritual. They were first admonished, once at least; for so Irenæus,[s] Tertullian,[t] Cyprian,[u] Ambrose,[x] and Jerome,[y] read that place of Titus, iii. But since that time all men, and at that time some read it, "Post unam et alteram admonitionem," reject a heretic; —"Rejection from the communion of saints after two warnings," that is the penalty. St. John expresses it by not 'eating with them,' not 'bidding them God speed;' but the persons against whom he decrees so severely, are such as denied Christ to be come in the flesh, direct antichrists. And let the sentence be as high as it lists in this case, all that I observe is, that since in so damnable doctrines nothing but spiritual censure, separation from the communion of the faithful, was enjoined and prescribed, we cannot pretend to an apostolical precedent, if in matters of dispute and innocent question, and of great uncertainty and no malignity, we shall proceed to sentence of death.

2. For it is but absurd and illiterate arguing, to say that

[s] Lib. iii. cap. 3. [t] De Præscript. [u] Lib. ad Quirinum.
[x] In hunc locum. [y] Ibidem.

excommunication is a greater punishment,—and killing a less; and therefore whoever may be excommunicated, may also be put to death: which indeed is the reasoning that Bellarmine uses. For, first, excommunication is not directly and of itself a greater punishment than corporal death, because it is indefinite and incomplete, and in order to a further punishment; which if it happens, then the excommunication was the inlet to it; if it does not, the excommunication did not signify half so much as the loss of a member, much less death. For it may be totally ineffectual, either by the iniquity of the proceeding, or repentance of the person; and in all times and cases it is a medicine, if the man please; if he will not, but perseveres in his impiety, then it is himself that brings the censure to effect, that actuates the judgment, and gives a sting and an energy upon that which otherwise would be χεὶρ ἄκυρος. Secondly, but when it is at worst, it does not kill the soul; it only consigns it to that death which it had deserved, and should have received independently from that sentence of the Church. Thirdly, and yet excommunication is to admirable purpose; for whether it refers to the person censured, or to others, it is prudential in itself, it is exemplary to others, it is medicinal to all. For the person censured is by this means threatened into piety, and the threatening made the more energetical upon him, because by fiction of law, or, as it were, by a sacramental representment, the pains of hell are made presential to him, and so becomes an act of prudent judicature, and excellent discipline, and the best instrument of spiritual government; because the nearer the threatening is reduced to matter, and the more present and circumstantiate it is made, the more operative it is upon our spirits while they are immerged in matter. And this is the full sense and power of excommunication in its direct intention: consequently and accidentally other evils might follow it; as in the times of the apostles the censured persons were buffeted by Satan, and even at this day there is less security even to the temporal condition of such a person, whom his spiritual parents have anathematized. But besides this, I know no warrant to affirm any thing of excommunication; for the sentence of the Church does but declare, not effect, the final sentence of damnation. Whoever deserves excommunication, deserves damnation; and he that repents shall

be saved, though he die out of the Church's external communion; and if he does not repent, he shall be damned, though he was not excommunicate.

3. But suppose it greater than the sentence of corporal death, yet it follows not, because heretics may be excommunicate, therefore killed; for from a greater to a less in a several kind of things the argument concludes not. It is a greater thing to make an excellent discourse than to make a shoe; yet he that can do the greater, cannot do this less. An angel cannot beget a man; and yet he can do a greater matter in that kind of operations, which we term spiritual and angelical. And if this were concluding, that whoever may be excommunicate, may be killed,—then, because of excommunications, the Church is confessed the sole and entire judge, she is also an absolute disposer of the lives of persons. I believe this will be but ill doctrine in Spain: for in "Bulla Cœnæ Domini" the king of Spain is every year excommunicated on Maunday-Thursday; but if by the same power he might also be put to death (as upon this ground he may), the pope might with more ease be invested in that part of St. Peter's patrimony, which that king hath invaded and surprised. But besides this, it were extreme harsh doctrine in a Roman consistory, from whence excommunications issue for trifles, for fees, for not suffering themselves infinitely to be oppressed, for any thing: if this be greater than death, how great a tyranny is that which doth more than kill men for less than trifles! or else how inconsequent is that argument, which concludes its purpose upon so false pretence and supposition!

4. Well, however zealous the apostles were against heretics, yet none were by them, or their dictates, put to death. The death of Ananias and Sapphira, and the blindness of Elymas the sorcerer, amount not to this, for they were miraculous inflictions: and the first was a punishment to vow-breach and sacrilege, the second of sorcery and open contestation against the religion of Jesus Christ; neither of them concerned the case of this present question. Or if the case were the same, yet the authority is not the same: for he that inflicted these punishments was infallible, and of a power competent; but no man at this day is so. But as yet people were converted by miracles, and preaching, and disputing,

and heretics by the same means were redargued, and all men instructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till Christian people were vexed by disagreeing persons, and were impatient and peevish by their own too-much confidence, and the luxuriance of a prosperous fortune: but then they would not endure persons that did dogmatize any thing, which might entrench upon their reputation or their interest. And it is observable that no man nor no age did ever teach the lawfulness of putting heretics to death, till they grew wanton with prosperity. But when the reputation of the governors was concerned, when the interests of men were endangered, when they had something to lose, when they had built their estimation upon the credit of disputable questions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they overvalued themselves and their own opinions, when some persons invaded bishopricks upon pretence of new opinions; then they, as they thrived in the favour of emperors, and in the success of their disputes, solicited the temporal power to banish, to fine, to imprison, and to kill, their adversaries.

5. So that the case stands thus: In the best times, amongst the best men, when there were fewer temporal ends to be served, when religion and the pure and simple designs of Christianity were only to be promoted, in those times and amongst such men no persecution was actual, nor persuaded, nor allowed, towards disagreeing persons. But as men had ends of their own and not of Christ, as they receded from their duty and religion from its purity, as Christianity began to be compounded with interests and blended with temporal designs, so men were persecuted for their opinions. This is most apparent, if we consider when persecution first came in, and if we observe how it was checked by the holiest and the wisest persons.

6. The first great instance I shall note, was in Priscillian and his followers, who were condemned to death by the tyrant Maximus. Which instance, although St. Jerome observes as a punishment and judgment for the crime of heresy, yet is of no use in the present question, because Maximus put some Christians of all sorts to death promiscuously, catholic and heretic, without choice; and therefore the Priscillianists might as well have called it a judgment upon the catholics, as the catholics upon them.

7. But when Ursatus and Stacius, two bishops, procured the Priscillianists' death by the power they had at court, St. Martin was so angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And St. Ambrose upon the same stock denied his communion to the Itaciani. And the account that Sulpicius gives of the story is this; "Hoc modo (says he) homines luce indignissimi pessimo exemplo necati sunt." The example was worse than the men. If the men were heretical, the execution of them however was unchristian.

8. But it was of more authority that the Nicene fathers supplicated the emperor, and prevailed for the banishment of Arius.[z] Of this we can give no other account, but that, by the history of the time, we see baseness enough and personal misdemeanour and factiousness of spirit in Arius to have deserved worse than banishment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the balance; which we have reason to believe was not so much as considered, because Constantine gave toleration to differing opinions, and Arius himself was restored upon such conditions to his country and office, which would not stand with the ends of the catholics, if they had been severe exactors of concurrence and union of persuasions.[a]

9. I am still within the scene of ecclesiastical persons, and am considering what the opinion of the learnedest and holiest prelates was concerning this great question. If we will believe St. Austin (who was a credible person), no good man did allow it: "Nullis tamen bonis in catholica hoc placet, ei usque ad mortem in quenquam, licet hæreticum, sæviatur." This was St. Austin's final opinion:[b] for he had first been of the mind, that it was not honest to do any violence to mispersuaded persons; and when upon an accident happening in Hippo he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then also he excepted death, and would by no means have any mere opinion made capital. But, for aught appears, St. Austin had greater reason to have retracted that retractation than his first opinion; for his saying of

[z] Sozom lib. i. c. 20.

[a] Socrates, lib. i. c. 26. Cont. Crescon. Grammat. lib. iii. c. 50. Vide Intiam Epist. 158, 159; et lib. i. c. 29. cont. tit. Petilian. Vide etiam Socrat. lib. iii. c. 3; et c. 29.

[b] Lib. ii. c. 5. retractat. vide Ep. 48. ad Vincent. script. post retract. et Ep. 50. ad Bonif.

"nullis bonis placet," was as true as the thing was reasonable it should be so. Witness those known testimonies of Tertullian,[c] Cyprian,[d] Lactantius,[e] St. Jerome,[f] Severus Sulpicius,[g] Minutius,[h] Hilary,[i] Damascenus,[k] Chrysostom,[l] Theophylact,[m] and Bernard,[n] and divers others, whom the reader may find quoted by the archbishop of Spalato, lib. viii. de Rep. Eccl. c. 8.

10. Against this concurrent testimony my reading can furnish me with no adversary, nor contrary instances, but in Atticus of Constantinople, Theodosius of Synada, in Stacius and Ursatus before reckoned. Only indeed some of the later popes of Rome began to be busy and unmerciful; but it was then when themselves were secure, and their interests great, and their temporal concernments highly considerable.

11. For it is most true, and not amiss to observe it, that no man who was under the ferula, did ever think it lawful to have opinions forced, or heretics put to death; and yet many men, who themselves have escaped the danger of a pile and a faggot, have changed their opinion just as the case was altered, that is, as themselves were unconcerned in the suffering. Petilian, Parmenian, and Gaudentius,[o] by no means would allow it lawful, for themselves were in danger, and were upon that side that is ill thought of and discountenanced: but Gregory and Leo,[p] popes of Rome, upon whose side the authority and advantages were, thought it lawful they should be punished and persecuted, for themselves were unconcerned in the danger of suffering. And therefore St. Gregory commends the exarch of Ravenna for forcing them who dissented from those men who called themselves the Church. And there were some divines in the lower Germany, who upon great reasons spake against the tyrannny of the Inquisition, and restraining prophesying, who yet, when they had shaken off the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their brethren. It was unjust in them, in all men unreasonable

[c] Ad Scapulam. [d] Lib. iii. Ep. 1. Epist. [e] Lib. v. c. 20.
[f] In c. xiii. Matt. et in c. ii. Hos. [g] In Vit. S. Martin.
[h] Octav. [i] Cont. Auxent. Arr. [k] 3. Sect. c. 32.
[l] In c. xiii. Matt. hom. 4. [m] In Evang. Matt.
[n] In verba Apost. fides ex auditu.
[o] Apud. Aug. lib. i. c. 7. cont. Ep. Parmenian; et lib. ii. c. 10. cont. tit. Petilian.
[p] Ep. i. ad Turbium. [q] Lib. i. Ep. 75.

and uncharitable, and often increases the error, but never lessens the danger.

12. But yet although the Church, I mean in her distinct and clerical capacity, was against destroying or punishing difference in opinion, till the popes of Rome did superseminate and persuade the contrary; yet the bishops did persuade the emperors to make laws against heretics, and to punish disobedient persons with fines, with imprisonment, with death and banishment respectively. This indeed calls us to a new account. For the churchmen might not proceed to blood nor corporal inflictions, but might they not deliver over to the secular arm, and persuade temporal princes to do it? For this I am to say, that since it is notorious that the doctrine of the clergy was against punishing heretics, the laws which were made by the emperors against them, might be for restraint of differing religion in order to the preservation of the public peace, which is too frequently violated by the division of opinions. But I am not certain whether that was always the reason, or whether or no some bishops of the court did not also serve their own ends in giving their princes such untoward counsel; but we find the laws made severally to several purposes, in divers cases and with different severity. Constantine the emperor made a sanction, "Ut parem cum fidelibus ii, qui errant, pacis et quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant."[r] The Emperor Gratian decreed, "Ut quam quisque vellet religionem sequeretur, et conventus ecclesiasticos semoto metu omnes agerent." But he excepted the Manichees, the Photinians, and Eunomians. Theodosius the Elder made a law of death against the anabaptists of his time, and banished Eunomius, and against other erring persons appointed a pecuniary mulct; but he did no executions so severe as his sanctions, to shew they were made 'in terrorem' only.[s] So were the laws of Valentinian and Martian, decreeing 'contra omnes qui prava docere tentant,' that they should be put to death; so did[t] Michael the emperor: but Justinian only decreed banishment.

13. But whatever whispers some politics might make to their princes, as the wisest and holiest did not think it lawful

[r] Apud Euseb. de Vita Constant.

[s] Vide Socr. lib. vii. c. 12. Vide Cod. de Hæretic. L. Manich. et Leg. Arriani et l. Quicunque.

[t] Apud Paulum Diac. lib. xvi. et lib. xxiv.

for churchmen alone to do executions, so neither did they transmit such persons to the secular judicature. And therefore when the edict of Macedonius the president was so ambiguous, that it seemed to threaten death to heretics, unless they recanted, St. Austin admonished him carefully to provide that no heretic should be put to death, alleging it not only to be unchristian, but illegal also, and not warranted by imperial constitutions; for before his time no laws were made for their being put to death: but however he prevailed that Macedonius published another edict, more explicit, and less seemingly severe. But in his epistle to Donatus the African proconsul, he is more confident and determinate; "Necessitate nobis impactâ et indictâ, ut potiùs occídi ab eis eligamus, quàm eos occidendos vestris judiciis ingeramus."

14. But afterward, many got a trick of giving them over to the secular power; which at the best is no better than hypocrisy, removing envy from themselves, and laying it upon others; a refusing to do that in external act which they do in counsel and approbation: which is a transmitting the act to another, and retaining a proportion of guilt unto themselves, even their own and the others' too. I end this with the saying of Chrysostom, "Dogmata impia et quæ ab hæreticis profecta sunt, arguere et anathematizare oportet; hominibus autem parcendum, et pro salute eorum orandum."[u]

SECTION XV.

How far the Church, or Governors, may act to the restraining false or differing Opinions.

But although heretical persons are not to be destroyed, yet heresy, being a work of the flesh, and all heretics criminal persons, whose acts and doctrine have influence upon communities of men, whether ecclesiastical or civil, the governors of the republic or Church respectively, are to do their duties in restraining those mischiefs which may happen to their several charges, for whose indemnity they are answerable. And therefore, according to the effect or malice of the doctrine or the person, so the cognizance of them belongs to

[u] Serm. de Anathemate.

several judicatures. If it be false doctrine in any capacity, and doth mischief in any sense, or teaches ill life in any instance, or encourages evil in any particular, δεῖ ἐπιστομίζειν, 'these men must be silenced,' they must be convinced by sound doctrine, and put to silence by spiritual evidence, and restrained by authority ecclesiastical, that is, by spiritual censures, according as it seems necessary to him who is most concerned in the regiment of the Church. For all this we have precept and precedent apostolical, and much reason. For, by thus doing, the governor of the Church uses all that authority that is competent, and all the means that is reasonable, and that proceeding which is regular, that he may discharge his cure, and secure his flock. And that he possibly may be deceived, in judging a doctrine to be heretical, and, by consequence, the person excommunicate suffers injury, is no argument against the reasonableness of the proceeding: for all the injury that is, is visible and in appearance, and so is his crime. Judges must judge according to their best reason, guided by law of God as their rule, and by evidence and appearance as their best instrument: and they can judge no better. If the judges be good and prudent, the error of proceeding will not be great nor ordinary; and there can be no better establishment of human judicature, than is a fallible proceeding upon an infallible ground. And if the judgment of heresy be made by estimate and proportion of the opinion to a good or a bad life respectively, supposing an error in the deduction, there will be no malice in the conclusion; and that he endeavours to secure piety according to the best of his understanding, and yet did mistake in his proceeding, is only an argument that he did his duty after the manner of men, possibly with the piety of a saint, though not with the understanding of an angel. And the little inconvenience that happens to the person injuriously judged, is abundantly made up in the excellence of the discipline, the goodness of the example, the care of the public, and all those great influences into the manners of men, which derive from such an act so publicly consigned. But such public judgment in matters of opinion must be seldom and curious, and never but to secure piety and a holy life: for in matters speculative, as all determinations are fallible, so scarce any of them are to purpose, nor ever able to make

compensation of either side, either for the public fraction, or the particular injustice, if it should so happen in the censure.

2. But then, as the Church may proceed thus far, yet no Christian man or community of men may proceed further. For if they be deceived in their judgment and censure, and yet have passed only spiritual censures, they are totally ineffectual, and come to nothing; there is no effect remaining upon the soul, and such censures are not to meddle with the body so much as indirectly. But if any other judgment pass upon persons erring, such judgments, whose effects remain, if the person be unjustly censured, nothing will answer and make compensation for such injuries. If a person be excommunicate unjustly, it will do him no hurt; but if he be killed or dismembered unjustly, that censure and infliction are not made ineffectual by his innocence, he is certainly killed and dismembered. So that as the Church's authority in such cases so restrained and made prudent, cautelous and orderly, is just and competent; so the proceeding is reasonable, it is provident for the public, and the inconveniences that may fall upon particulars so little, as that the public benefit makes ample compensation, so long as the proceeding is but spiritual.

3. This discourse is in the case of such opinions, which, by the former rules, are formal heresies, and upon practical inconveniences. But for matters of question, which have not in them an enmity to the public tranquillity, as the republic hath nothing to do, upon the ground of all the former discourses; so if the Church meddles with them where they do not derive into ill life, either in the person or in the consequent, or else are destructions of the foundation of religion which is all one (or that those fundamental articles are of greatest necessity in order to a virtuous and godly life, which is wholly built upon them, and therefore are principally necessary)—if she meddles further, otherwise than by preaching, and conferring, and exhortation, she becomes tyrannical in her government, makes herself an immediate judge of consciences and persuasions, lords it over their faith, destroys unity and charity: and as he that dogmatizes the opinion becomes criminal, if he troubles the Church with an immodest, peevish, and pertinacious proposal of his article, not simply necessary; so the Church does not do her duty, if

she so condemns it 'pro tribunali,' as to enjoin him and all her subjects to believe the contrary. And as there may be pertinacy in doctrine, so there may be pertinacy in judging; and both are faults. The peace of the Church and the unity of her doctrine is best conserved, when it is judged by the proportion it hath to that rule of unity which the apostles gave, that is, the creed, for articles of mere belief, and the precepts of Jesus Christ, and the practical rules of piety, which are most plain and easy, and without controversy, set down in the gospels and writings of the apostles. But to multiply articles, and adopt them into the family of the faith, and to require assent to such articles, which (as St. Paul's phrase is) are 'of doubtful disputation' equal to that assent we give to matters of faith, is to build a tower upon the top of a bulrush; and the further the effect of such proceedings does extend, the worse they are; the very making such a law is unreasonable, the inflicting spiritual censures upon them that cannot do so much violence to their understanding as to obey it, is unjust and ineffectual; but to punish the person with death, or with corporal infliction, indeed it is effectual, but it is therefore tyrannical. We have seen what the Church may do towards restraining false or differing opinions: next I shall consider, by way of corollary, what the prince may do as for his interest, and only in securing his people, and serving the ends of true religion.

SECTION XVI.

Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give Toleration to several Religions.

1. For upon these very grounds we may easily give account of that great question, Whether it be lawful for a prince to give toleration to several religions? For, first, it is a great fault that men will call the several sects of Christians by the names of several religions. The religion of Jesus Christ is 'the form of sound doctrine and wholesome words,' which is set down in Scripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plain places, and separated as for the question of necessary or not necessary by the symbol of the apostles. Those impertinences, which the wantonness and vanity of men hath commenced, which their

interests have promoted, which serve not truth so much as their own ends, are far from being distinct religions: for matters of opinion are no parts of the worship of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are in that proportion as they contribute parts, and actions, and minute particulars of that religion, to whose end they do or pretend to serve. And such are all the sects and all the pretences of Christians, but pieces and minutes of Christianity, if they do serve the great end; as every man for his own sect and interest believes for his share it does.

2. Toleration hath a double sense or purpose. For sometimes by it men understand a public license and exercise of a sect: sometimes it is only an indemnity of the persons privately to convene and to opine, as they see cause, and as they mean to answer to God. Both these are very much to the same purpose, unless some persons whom we are bound to satisfy be scandalized, and then the prince is bound to do as he is bound to satisfy. To God it is all one: for, abstracting from the offence of persons, which is to be considered just as our obligation is to content the persons, it is all one whether we indulge to them to meet publicly or privately, to do actions of religion concerning which we are not persuaded that they are truly holy. To God it is just one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the same, only the circumstance of public and private is different; which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concern any thing, but the matter of scandal and relation to the minds and fantasies of certain persons.

3. So that to tolerate is not to persecute. And the question, whether the prince may tolerate divers persuasions, is no more than whether he may lawfully persecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this case he is just so to tolerate diversity of persuasions as he is to tolerate public actions; for no opinion is judicable, nor no person punishable, but for a sin; and if his opinion, by reason of its managing or its effect, be in itself or becomes a sin to the person, then as he is to do towards other sins, so to that opinion or man so opining. But to believe so, or not so, when there is no more but mere believing, is not in his power to enjoin, therefore not to punish. And it is not only lawful to tolerate disagreeing persuasions, but the authority of God only is

competent to take notice of it, and infallible to determine it, and fit to judge; and therefore no human authority is sufficient to do all those things, which can justify the inflicting temporal punishments upon such as do not conform in their persuasions to a rule or authority, which is not only fallible, but supposed by the disagreeing person to be actually deceived.

4. But I consider, that in the toleration of a different opinion, religion is not properly and immediately concerned, so as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be safe in diversity of persuasions, and it is also a part of Christian religion,[x] that the liberty of men's consciences should be preserved in all things, where God hath not set a limit and made a restraint; that the soul of man should be free, and acknowledge no master but Jesus Christ; that matters spiritual should not be restrained by punishments corporal; that the same meekness and charity should be preserved in the promotion of Christianity, that gave it foundation, and increment, and firmness in its first publication; that conclusions should not be more dogmatical than the virtual resolution and efficacy of the premises; and that the persons should not more certainly be condemned than their opinions confuted; and lastly, that the infirmities of men and difficulties of things should be both put in balance, to make abatement in the definitive sentence against men's persons. But then, because toleration of opinions is not properly a question of religion, it may be a question of policy: and although a man may be a good Christian, though he believe an error not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally disturb the public peace, through the overactiveness of the persons, and the confidence of their belief, and the opinion of its appendant necessity: and therefore toleration of differing persuasions in these cases is to be considered upon political grounds, and is just so to be admitted or denied as the opinions or toleration of them may consist with the public and necessary ends of government. Only this; as Christian princes must look to the interest of their government, so especially must they consider the interests of Christianity, and not call every redargution or modest discovery

[x] Humani juris et naturalis potestatis, unicuique quod putaverit colere. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ suscipi spontè debet, non vi.—*Tertul. ad Scapulam.*

of an established error, by the name of disturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that the peevishness and impatience of contradiction in the governors may break the peace. Let them remember but the gentleness of Christianity, the liberty of consciences which ought to be preserved, and let them do justice to the persons, whoever they are, that are peevish, provided no man's person be overborne with prejudice. For if it be necessary for all men to subscribe to the present established religion, by the same reason at another time a man may be bound to subscribe to the contradictory, and so to all religions in the world. And they only who by their too much confidence entitle God to all their fancies, and make them to be questions of religion, and evidences for heaven, or consignations to hell, they only think this doctrine unreasonable, and they are the men that first disturb the Church's peace, and then think there is no appeasing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that consider things wisely, understand that since salvation and damnation depend not upon impertinences, and yet that public peace and tranquillity may,—the prince is, in this case, to seek how to secure government, and the issues and intentions of that, while there is in these cases directly no insecurity to religion, unless by the accidental uncharitableness of them that dispute: which uncharitableness is also much prevented when the public peace is secured, and no person is on either side engaged upon revenge,[y] or troubled with disgrace, or vexed with punishments by any decretory sentence against him. It was the saying of a wise statesman, I mean, Thuanus, "Hæretici, qui, pace data, factionibus scinduntur, persecutione uniuntur contra rempublicam." If you persecute heretics or discrepants, they unite themselves as to a common defence: if you permit them, they divide themselves upon private interest; and the rather, if this interest was an ingredient of the opinion.

5. The sum is this: it concerns the duty of a prince, because it concerns the honour of God, that all vices and every part of ill life be discountenanced and restrained: and therefore in relation to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For the understanding being to direct the will, and opinions to guide

[y] Dextera præcipuè capit indulgentia mentes;
Asperitas odium sævaque bella parit.—*Ovid. A. A.* ii. 145.

our practices, they are considerable only as they teach impiety and vice, as they either dishonour God or disobey him. Now all such doctrines are to be condemned; but for the persons preaching such doctrines, if they neither justify nor approve the pretended consequences, which are certainly impious, they are to be separated from that consideration. But if they know such consequences and allow them, or if they do not stay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take sin beforehand, and manage them impiously in any sense, or if either themselves or their doctrine do really, and without colour or feigned pretext, disturb the public peace and just interests,[z] they are not to be suffered. In all other cases it is not only lawful to permit them, but it is also necessary that princes and all in authority should not persecute discrepant opinions. And in such cases wherein persons not otherwise incompetent are bound to reprove an error (as they are in many), in all these if the prince makes restraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the laws of Jesus Christ.

SECTION XVII.

Of Compliance with disagreeing Persons, or weak Consciences, in general.

1. Upon these grounds it remains, that we reduce this doctrine to practical conclusions, and consider, among the differing sects and opinions which trouble these parts of Christendom, and come into our concernment, which sects of Christians are to be tolerated, and how far; and which are to be restrained and punished in their several proportions.

2. The first consideration is, since diversity of opinions does more concern public peace than religion, what is to be done to persons who disobey a public sanction upon a true allegation, that they cannot believe it to be lawful to

[z] Exstat prudens monitum Mecænatis apud Dionem Cassium ad Augustum in hæc verba; Eos verò qui in Divinis aliquid innovant, odio habe, et coerce, non deorum solùm causâ, sed quia nova numina hi tales introducentes multos impellunt ad mutationem rerum: unde conjurationes, seditiones, conciliabula exsistunt, res profecto minimè conducibiles principatui. Et legibus quoque expressum est, quod in religionem committitur, in omnium fertur injuriam.

obey such constitutions, although they disbelieve them upon insufficient grounds; that is, whether in 'constituta lege' disagreeing persons or weak consciences are to be complied withal, and their disobeying and disagreeing tolerated.

3. First; In this question, there is no distinction can be made between persons truly weak and but pretending so. For all that pretend to it are to be allowed the same liberty, whatsoever it be; for no man's spirit is known to any but to God and himself: and therefore pretences and realities in this case are both alike in order to the public toleration. And this very thing is one argument to persuade a negative. For the chief thing in this case is the concernment of public government, which is then most of all violated, when what may prudently be permitted to some purposes, may be demanded to many more, and the piety of the laws abused to the impiety of other men's ends. And if laws be made so malleable as to comply with weak consciences, he that hath a mind to disobey, is made impregnable against the coercitive power of the laws by this pretence. For a weak conscience signifies nothing in this case, but a dislike of the law upon a contrary persuasion. For if some weak consciences do obey the law, and others do not, it is not their weakness indefinitely that is the cause of it, but a definite and particular persuasion to the contrary. So that if such a pretence be excuse sufficient from obeying, then the law is a sanction obliging every one to obey that hath a mind to it, and he that hath not, may choose; that is, it is no law at all; for he that hath a mind to it may do it if there be no law; and he that hath no mind to it need not for all the law.

4. And, therefore, the wit of man cannot prudently frame a law of that temper and expedient, but either he must lose the formality of a law, and neither have power coercitive nor obligatory, but 'ad arbitrium inferiorum;' or else it cannot, antecedently to the particular case, give leave to any sort of men to disagree or disobey.

5. Secondly; Suppose that a law be made with great reason, so as to satisfy divers persons pious and prudent, that it complies with the necessity of government, and promotes the interest of God's service and public order, it may easily be imagined that these persons which are obedient sons of the Church, may be as zealous for the public order and dis-

cipline of the Church as others for their opinion against it, and may be as much scandalized if disobedience be tolerated, as others are if the law be exacted : and what shall be done in this case ? Both sorts of men cannot be complied withal : because as these pretend to be offended at the law, and by consequence (if they understand the consequents of their own opinion) at them that obey the law ; so the others are justly offended at them that unjustly disobey it. If, therefore, there be any on the right side as confident and zealous as they who are on the wrong side, then the disagreeing persons are not to be complied with, to avoid giving offence : for if they be, offence is given to better persons ; and so the mischief which such complying seeks to prevent, is made greater and more unjust, obedience is discouraged, and disobedience is legally canonized for the result of a holy and a tender conscience.

6. Thirdly ; Such complying with the disagreeings of a sort of men, is the total overthrow of all discipline, and it is better to make no laws of public worship, than to rescind them in the very constitution ; and there can be no end in making the sanction, but to make the law ridiculous, and the authority contemptible. For, to say that complying with weak consciences, in the very framing of a law of discipline, is the way to preserve unity, were all one as to say, to take away all laws is the best way to prevent disobedience. In such matters of indifference, the best way of cementing the fraction, is to unite the parts in the authority ; for then the question is but one, viz. whether the authority must be obeyed or not. But if a permission be given of disputing the particulars, the questions become next to infinite. A mirror, when it is broken, represents the object multiplied and divided ; but if it be entire, and through one centre transmits the species to the eye, the vision is one and natural. Laws are the mirror in which men are to dress and compose their actions, and therefore must not be broken with such clauses of exception, which may, without remedy, be abused to the prejudice of authority, and peace, and all human sanctions. And I have known in some churches, that this pretence hath been nothing but a design to discredit the law, to dismantle the authority that made it, to raise their own credit and a trophy of their zeal, to make it a characteristic note of a sect, and the cognizance of holy

persons: and yet the men that claimed exemption from the laws upon pretence of having weak consciences, if in hearty expression you had told them so to their heads, they would have spit in your face, and were so far from confessing themselves weak, that they thought themselves able to give laws to Christendom, to instruct the greatest clerks, and to catechise the Church herself. And, which is the worst of all, they who were perpetually clamorous that the severity of the laws should slacken as to their particular, and in matter adiaphorous (in which, if the Church hath any authority, she hath power to make laws) to indulge a leave to them to do as they list, —yet were the most imperious amongst men most decretory in their sentences, and most impatient of any disagreeing from them, though in the least minute and particular: whereas, by all the justice of the world, they who persuade such a compliance in matters of fact, and of so little question, should not deny to tolerate persons that differ in questions of great difficulty and contestation.

7. Fourthly; But yet since all things almost in the world have been made matters of dispute, and the will of some men, and the malice of others, and the infinite industry and pertinacy of contesting, and resolution to conquer, hath abused some persons innocently into a persuasion that even the laws themselves, though never so prudently constituted, are superstitious or impious;—such persons, who are otherwise pious, humble, and religious, are not to be destroyed for such matters, which in themselves are not of concernment to salvation, and neither are so accidentally to such men and in such cases where they are innocently abused, and they err without purpose and design. And, therefore, if there be a public disposition in some persons to dislike laws of a certain quality, if it be foreseen, it is to be considered 'in lege dicenda;' and whatever inconvenience or particular offence is foreseen, is either to be directly avoided in the law, or else a compensation in the excellence of the law, and certain advantages made to outweigh their pretensions. But 'in lege jam dicta,' because there may be a necessity some persons should have a liberty indulged them, it is necessary that the governors of the Church should be intrusted with a power to consider the particular case, and indulge a liberty to the person, and grant personal dispensations. This, I say, is to be done at several times, upon particular

instance, upon singular consideration, and new emergencies. But that a whole kind of men, such a kind to which all men, without possibility of being confuted, may pretend, should at once, in the very frame of the law, be permitted to disobey, is to nullify the law, to destroy discipline, and to hallow disobedience; it takes away the obliging part of the law, and makes that the thing enacted shall not be enjoined, but tolerated only; it destroys unity and uniformity, which to preserve was the very end of such laws of discipline; it bends the rule to the thing which is to be ruled, so that the law obeys the subject, not the subject the law; it is to make a law for particulars, not upon general reason and congruity, against the prudence and design of all laws in the world, and absolutely without the example of any church in Christendom; it prevents no scandal, for some will be scandalized at the authority itself, some at the complying and remissness of discipline, and several men at matters and upon ends contradictory: all which cannot, some ought not to be complied withal.

8. Sixthly; The sum is this, The end of the laws of discipline are in an immediate order to the conservation and ornament of the public; and therefore the laws must not so tolerate, as by conserving persons to destroy themselves and the public benefit: but if there be cause for it, they must be cassated; or if there be no sufficient cause, the complyings must be so as may best preserve the particulars in conjunction with the public end, which, because it is primarily intended, is of greatest consideration. But the particulars, whether of case or person, are to be considered occasionally and emergently by the judges, but cannot antecedently and regularly be determined by a law.

9. But this sort of men is of so general pretence, that all laws and all judges may easily be abused by them. Those sects which are signified by a name, which have a system of articles, a body of profession, may be more clearly determined in their question concerning the lawfulness of permitting their professions and assemblies.

I shall instance in two, which are most troublesome and most disliked, and by an account made of these, we may make judgment what may be done towards others whose errors are not apprehended of so great malignity. The men I mean, are the anabaptists and the papists.

SECTION XVIII.

A particular Consideration of the Opinions of the Anabaptists.

1. In the anabaptists, I consider only their two capital opinions, the one against the baptism of infants, the other against magistracy: and because they produce different judgments and various effects, all their other fancies, which vary as the moon does, may stand or fall in their proportion and likeness to these.

2. And first I consider their denying baptism to infants. Although it be a doctrine justly condemned by the most sorts of Christians upon great grounds of reason, yet possibly their defence may be so great as to take off much, and rebate the edge of their adversaries' assault. It will be neither unpleasant nor unprofitable to draw a short scheme of plea for each party; the result of which possibly may be, that though they be deceived, yet they have so great excuse on their side, that their error is not impudent or vincible. The baptism of infants rests principally and usually upon this discourse.

3. When God made a covenant with Abraham for himself and his posterity, into which the Gentiles were reckoned by spiritual adoption, he did, for the present, consign that covenant with the sacrament of circumcision. The extent of which right was to all his family, from the 'major domo' to the 'proselytus domicilio,' and to infants of eight days old. Now, the very nature of this covenant being a covenant of faith for its formality, and with all faithful people for the object, and circumcision being a seal of this covenant, if ever any rite do supervene to consign the same covenant, that rite must acknowledge circumcision for its type and precedent. And this the apostle tells us in express doctrine. Now the nature of a type is, to give some proportions to its successor the antitype; and they both being seals of the same righteousness of faith, it will not easily be found where these two seals have any such distinction in their nature or purposes, as to appertain to persons of differing capacity, and not equally concern all. And this argument was thought of so much force by some of those excellent men, which

were bishops in the Primitive Church, that a good bishop writ an epistle to St. Cyprian, to know of him, whether or no it were lawful to baptize infants before the eighth day, because the type of baptism was ministered in that circumcision; he, in his discourse, supposing that the first rite was a direction to the second, which prevailed with him so far as to believe it to limit every circumstance.

4. And not only this type, but the acts of Christ which were previous to the institution of baptism, did prepare our understanding by such impresses as were sufficient to produce such persuasions in us, that Christ intended this ministry for the actual advantage of infants as well as of persons of understanding. For 'Christ commanded that children should be brought unto him; he took them in his arms, he imposed hands on them and blessed them;' and without question did, by such acts of favour, consign his love to them, and them to a capacity of an eternal participation of it. And possibly the invitation which Christ made to all to come to him, all them that are heavy laden, did, in its proportion, concern infants, as much as others, if they be guilty of original sin, and if that sin be a burden, and presses them to any spiritual danger or inconvenience. And if they be not, yet Christ, who was (as Tertullian's phrase is) 'nullius pœnitentiæ debitor,' guilty of no sin, "obliged to no repentance," needing no purification and no pardon, was baptized by St. John's baptism, which was the baptism of repentance. And it is all the reason in the world, that since the grace of Christ is as large as the prevarication of Adam, all they who are made guilty by the first Adam, should be cleansed by the second. But as they are guilty by another man's act, so they should be brought to the font to be purified by others; there being the same proportion of reason, that by others' acts they should be relieved, who were in danger of perishing by the acts of others. And, therefore, St. Austin argues excellently to this purpose; "Accommodat illis mater ecclesia aliorum pedes, ut veniant; aliorum cor, ut credant; aliorum linguam, ut fateantur: ut quoniam, quòd ægri sunt, alio peccante prægravantur, sic, cùm sani fiant, alio confitente salventur."[a] And Justin Martyr; Ἀξιοῦνται δὲ τῶν διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἀγαθῶν τὰ βρέφη τῇ πίστει τῶν προσφερόντων αὐτὰ τῷ βαπτίσματι.[b]

5. But whether they have original sin or no, yet, take

[a] Serm. x. de Verb. Apost. [b] Resp. ad Orthodoxos.

them 'in puris naturalibus,' they cannot go to God, or attain to eternity, to which they were intended in their first being and creation; and, therefore, much less since their naturals are impaired by the curse on human nature, procured by Adam's prevarication. And if a natural agent cannot 'in puris naturalibus' attain to heaven, which is a supernatural end,—much less when it is loaden with accidental and grievous impediments. Now, then, since the only way revealed to us of acquiring heaven is by Jesus Christ; and the first inlet into Christianity and access to him is by baptism, as appears by the perpetual analogy of the New Testament; either infants are not persons capable of that end which is the perfection of human nature, and to which the soul of man in its being made immortal was essentially designed, and so are miserable and deficient from the very end of humanity, if they die before the use of reason;—or else they must be brought to Christ by the church-doors, that is, by the font and waters of baptism.

6. And in reason it seems more pregnant and plausible, that infants rather than men of understanding should be baptized. For since the efficacy of the sacraments depends upon Divine institution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects, independently upon man, in them that do not hinder their operation; since infants cannot, by any acts of their own, promote the hope of their own salvation, which men of reason and choice may, by acts of virtue and election; it is more agreeable to the goodness of God, the honour and excellence of the sacrament, and the necessity of its institution, that it should in infants supply the want of human acts and free obedience: which the very thing itself seems to say it does, because its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man's part, but that its efficacy be not hindered. And then in infants the disposition is equal, and the necessity more; they cannot 'ponere obicem,' and by the same reason cannot do other acts, which without the sacraments do advantages towards our hopes of heaven, and, therefore, have more need to be supplied by an act and an institution Divine and supernatural.

7. And this is not only necessary in respect of the condition of infants' incapacity to do acts of grace, but also in obedience to Divine precept. For Christ made a law whose sanction is with an exclusive negative to them that are not

baptized; "Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If then infants have a capacity of being coheirs with Christ in the kingdom of his Father, as Christ affirms they have, by saying, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" then there is a necessity that they should be brought to baptism; there being an absolute exclusion of all persons not baptized and all persons not spiritual, from the kingdom of heaven.

8. But indeed it is destruction of all the hopes and happiness of infants, a denying to them an exemption from the final condition of beasts and insectiles, or else a designing of them to a worse misery, to say that God hath not appointed some external or internal means of bringing them to an eternal happiness. Internal they have none; for grace being an improvement and heightening the faculties of nature in order to a heightened and supernatural end, grace hath no influence or efficacy upon their faculties, who can do no natural acts of understanding: and if there be no external means, then they are destitute of all hopes and possibilities of salvation.

But, thanks be to God, he hath provided better, and told us accordingly, for he hath made a promise of the Holy Ghost to infants as well as to men: "The promise is made to you and to your children," said St. Peter;[c] 'the promise of the Father,' 'the promise that he would send the Holy Ghost.' Now, if you ask how this promise shall be conveyed to our children, we have an express out of the same sermon of St. Peter; "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." So that, therefore, because the Holy Ghost is promised, and baptism is the means of receiving the promise,—therefore, baptism pertains to them to whom the promise, which is the effect of baptism, does appertain. And that we may not think this argument is fallible, or of human collection, observe that it is the argument of the same apostle in express terms: for in the case of Cornelius and his family, he justified his proceeding by this very medium, "Shall we deny baptism to them who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Which discourse, if it be reduced to form of argument, says this; they that are capable of the same grace, are receptive of the same sign: but then (to

[c] Acts, ii. 38, 39.

make the syllogism up with an assumption proper to our present purpose) infants are capable of the same grace, that is, of the Holy Ghost (for 'the promise is to our children' as well as to us, and St. Paul says 'the children of believing parents are holy,' and therefore have the Holy Ghost, who is the fountain of holiness and sanctification): therefore they are to receive the sign and the seal of it, that is, the sacrament of baptism.

10. And indeed, since God entered a covenant with the Jews, which did also actually involve their children, and gave them a sign to establish the covenant and its appendant promise, either God does not so much love the Church as he did the synagogue, and the mercies of the Gospel are more restrained than the mercies of the Law, God having made a covenant with the infants of Israel, and none with the children of Christian parents; or if he hath, yet we want the comfort of its consignation; and unless our children are to be baptized, and so entitled to the promises of the new covenant, as the Jewish babes were by circumcision, this mercy, which appertains to infants, is so secret and undeclared and unconsigned, that we want much of that mercy and outward testimony, which gave them comfort and assurance.

11. And in proportion to these precepts and revelations was the practice apostolical; for they (to whom Christ gave in precept to "make disciples all nations, baptizing them," and knew that nations without children never were, and that therefore they were passively concerned in that commission) baptized whole families, particularly that of Stephanas and divers others, in which it is more than probable there were some minors, if not sucking babes. And this practice did descend upon the Church in after-ages by tradition apostolical. Of this we have sufficient testimony from Origen; "Pro hoc ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare:"[d] and St. Austin, "Hoc ecclesia à majorum fide percepit."[e] And generally all writers (as Calvin says) affirm the same thing. For, "Nullus est scriptor tam vetustus, qui non ejus originem ad apostolorum seculum pro certo referat."[f] From hence the conclusion is, that infants ought to be baptized, that it is simply necessary, that

[d] In Rom. vi. tom. ii. p. 543. [e] Serm. x. de Verb. Apost. c. 2.
[f] 4 Instit. c. xvi. sect. 8.

they who deny it, are heretics; and such are not to be endured, because they deny to infants hopes, and take away the possibility of their salvation, which is revealed to us on no other condition of which they are capable but baptism. For by the insinuation of the type, by the action of Christ, by the title infants have to heaven, by the precept of the Gospel, by the energy of the promise, by the reasonableness of the thing, by the infinite necessity on the infants' part, by the practice apostolical, by their tradition and the universal practice of the Church, by all these God and good people proclaim the lawfulness, the convenience, and the necessity, of infants' baptism.

12. To all this the anabaptist gives a soft and gentle answer, that it is a goodly harangue, which upon strict examination will come to nothing; that it pretends fairly, and signifies little; that some of these allegations are false, some impertinent, and all the rest insufficient.

13. For the argument from circumcision is invalid upon infinite considerations. Figures and types prove nothing, unless a commandment go along with them, or some express to signify such to be their purpose. For the deluge of waters and the ark of Noah were a figure of baptism, said Peter; and if therefore the circumstances of one should be drawn to the other, we should make baptism a prodigy rather than a rite. The paschal lamb was a type of the eucharist, which succeeds the other as baptism does to circumcision; but because there was in the manducation of the paschal lamb no prescription of sacramental drink, shall we thence conclude, that the eucharist is to be ministered but in one kind? And even in the very instance of this argument, supposing a correspondence of analogy between circumcision and baptism, yet there is no correspondence of identity. For although it were granted, that both of them did consign the covenant of faith, yet there is nothing in the circumstance of children's being circumcised that so concerns that mystery but that it might very well be given to children, and yet baptism only to men of reason. Because circumcision left a character in the flesh, which being imprinted upon infants, did its work to them when they came to age; and such a character was necessary, because there was no word added to the sign: but baptism imprints nothing that remains

on the body; and if it leaves a character at all, it is upon the soul, to which also the word is added, which is as much a part of the sacrament as the sign itself is. For both which reasons it is requisite that the persons baptized should be capable of reason, that they may be capable both of the word of the sacrament, and the impress made upon the spirit. Since therefore the reason of this parity does wholly fail, there is nothing left to infer a necessity of complying in this circumstance of age any more than in the other annexes of the type. And the case is clear in the bishop's question to Cyprian: for why shall not infants be baptized just upon the eighth day as well as circumcised?[g] If the correspondence of the rites be an argument to infer one circumstance, which is impertinent and accidental to the mysteriousness of the rite, why shall it not infer all? And then also females must not be baptized, because they were not circumcised. But it were more proper, if we would understand it right, to prosecute the analogy from the type to the antitype by way of letter, and spirit, and signification; and as circumcision figures baptism, so also the adjuncts of the circumcision shall signify something spiritual in the adherences of baptism. And therefore as infants were circumcised, so spiritual infants shall be baptized, which is spiritual circumcision: for therefore babes had the ministry of the type, to signify that we must, when we give our names to Christ, become νήπιοι ἐν πονηρίᾳ,—"children in malice;" "for unless you become like one of these little ones, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," said our blessed Saviour; and then the type is made complete. And this seems to have been the sense of the Primitive Church: for in the age next to the apostles they gave to all baptized persons milk and honey, to represent to them their duty, that though in age and understanding they were men, yet they were babes in Christ, and children in malice. But to infer the sense of the pædo-baptists, is so weak a manner of arguing, that Austin, whose device it was (and men use to be in love with their own fancies), at the most pretended it but as probable and a mere conjecture.

14. And as ill success will they have with the other arguments as with this. For from the action of Christ's blessing infants to infer that they are to be baptized, proves

[g] Lib. iii. Epist. 8. ad Fidum.

nothing so much as that there is great want of better arguments. The conclusion would be, with more probability, derived thus: Christ blessed children and so dismissed them, but baptized them not; therefore infants are not to be baptized. But let this be as weak as its enemy, yet that Christ did not baptize them is an argument sufficient that Christ hath other ways of bringing them to heaven than by baptism, he passed his act of grace upon them by benediction and imposition of hands.

15. And therefore, although neither infants nor any man 'in puris naturalibus' can attain to a supernatural end, without the addition of some instrument or means of God's appointing ordinarily and regularly; yet where God hath not appointed a rule nor an order, as in the case of infants we contend he hath not,—the argument is invalid. And as we are sure that God hath not commanded infants to be baptized; so we are sure God will do them no injustice, nor damn them for what they cannot help.

16. And therefore let them be pressed with all the inconveniencies that are consequent to original sin, yet either it will not be laid to the charge of infants, so as to be sufficient to condemn them; or if it could, yet the mercy and absolute goodness of God will secure them, if he takes them away before they can glorify him with a free obedience. "Quid ergò festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum?" was the question of Tertullian.[h] He knew no such danger from their original guilt, as to drive them to a laver, of which in "that age of innocence" they had no need, as he conceived. And therefore there is no necessity of flying to the help of others for tongue, and heart, and faith, and predispositions to baptism: for what need all this stir? As infants without their own consent, without any act of their own, and without any exterior solemnity, contracted the guilt of Adam's sin, and so are liable to all the punishment, which can with justice descend upon his posterity, who are personally innocent; so infants shall be restored without any solemnity or act of their own, or of any other men for them, by the second Adam, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, by his righteousness and mercies applied either immediately, or how or when he shall be pleased to appoint. And so

[h] De Baptism.

Austin's argument will come to nothing, without any need of godfathers, or the faith of any body else. And it is too narrow a conception of God Almighty, because he hath tied us to the observation of the ceremonies of his own institution, that therefore he hath tied himself to it. Many thousand ways there are, by which God can bring any reasonable soul to himself: but nothing is more unreasonable, than, because he hath tied all men of years and discretion to this way, therefore we, of our own heads, shall carry infants to him that way without his direction. The conceit is poor and low, and the action consequent to it is too bold and venturous. "Mysterium meum mihi et filiis domus meæ." Let him do what he please to infants, we must not.

17. Only this is certain, that God hath as great care of infants as of others; and because they have no capacity of doing such acts as may be in order to acquiring salvation, God will, by his own immediate mercy, bring them thither, where he hath intended them: but to say that therefore he will do it by an external act and ministry, and that confined to a particular, viz. this rite and no other, is no good argument, unless God could not do it without such means, or that he had said he would not. And why cannot God as well do his mercies to infants now immediately, as he did before the institution either of circumcision or baptism?

18. However, there is no danger that infants should perish for want of this external ministry, much less for prevaricating Christ's precepts of "Nisi quis renatus fuerit," &c. For first, the water and the Spirit in this place signify the same thing; and by water is meant the effect of the Spirit, cleansing and purifying the soul, as appears in its parallel place of Christ 'baptizing with the Spirit and with fire.' For although this was literally fulfilled in Pentecost, yet morally there is more in it; for it is the sign of the effect of the Holy Ghost, and his productions upon the soul; and it was an excellence of our blessed Saviour's office, that he baptizes *all* that come to him, with the Holy Ghost and with fire: for so St. John, preferring Christ's mission and office before his own, tells the Jews, not Christ's disciples, that Christ should baptize them with fire and the Holy Spirit, that is, "all that come to him," as John the Baptist did with water; for so lies the antithesis. And you may as well conclude, that infants

must also pass through the fire as through the water. And that we may not think this a trick to elude the pressure of this place, Peter says the same thing: for when he had said that baptism saves us, he adds by way of explication, "not the washing of the flesh, but the confidence of a good conscience towards God;" plainly saying, that it is not water, or the purifying of the body, but the cleansing of the Spirit, that does that which is supposed to be the effect of baptism. And if our Saviour's exclusive negative be expounded by analogy to this of Peter, as certainly the other parallel instance must, and this may,—then it will be so far from proving the necessity of infants' baptism, that it can conclude for no man that he is obliged to the rite; and the doctrine of the baptism is only to derive from the very words of institution, and not to be forced from words which were spoken before it was ordained. But to let pass this advantage, and to suppose it meant of external baptism, yet this no more infers a necessity of infants' baptism, than the other words of Christ infer a necessity to give them the holy communion; "Nisi comederitis carnem filii hominis, et biberitis sanguinem, non introibitis in regnum cœlorum:" and yet we do not think these words sufficient argument to communicate them. If men therefore will do us justice, either let them give both sacraments to infants, as some ages of the Church did, or neither. For the wit of man is not able to shew a disparity in the sanction, or in the energy of its expression. And Simeon Thessalonicensis derides "inertem Latinorum" λεπτολογίαν, as we express it, "the lazy trifling of the Latins," who dream of a difference. Βαβαὶ τῆς ἀλογίας ἅμα καὶ ἀτοπίας. Καὶ διά τι βαπτίζεις;—"O the unreasonableness and absurdity! For why do you baptize them?" Meaning that, because they are equally ignorant in baptism as in the eucharist, that which hinders them in one, is the same impediment in both. And therefore they were honest that understood the obligation to be parallel, and performed it accordingly: and yet because we say they were deceived in one distance, and yet the obligation (all the world can reasonably say but) is the same; they are as honest and as reasonable that do neither. And since the ancient Church did, with an equal opinion of necessity, give them the communion, and yet men nowadays do not,—why shall men be burdened with a prejudice and a

name of obloquy for not giving the infants one sacrament more, than they are disliked for not affording them the other? If anabaptist shall be a name of disgrace, why shall not some other name be invented for them that deny to communicate infants, which shall be equally disgraceful, or else both the opinions signified by such names be accounted no disparagement, but receive their estimate according to their truth?

19. Of which truth, since we are now taking account from pretences of Scripture, it is considerable that the discourse of St. Peter,—which is intended for the entitling infants to the promise of the Holy Ghost, and by consequence to baptism, which is supposed to be its instrument and convenience,—is wholly a fancy, and hath in it nothing of certainty or demonstration, and not much probability. For besides that the thing itself is unreasonable, and the Holy Ghost works by the heightening and improving our natural faculties, and therefore it is a promise that so concerns them as they are reasonable creatures, and may have a title to it, in proportion to their nature, but no possession or reception of it till their faculties come into act; besides this, I say, the words mentioned in St. Peter's sermon (which are the only record of the promise) are interpreted upon a weak mistake. "The promise belongs to you and to your children;" therefore infants are actually receptive of it in that capacity; that is the argument. But the reason of it is not yet discovered, nor ever will; for "to you and your children" is to you and your posterity, to you and your children when they are of the same capacity, in which you are effectually receptive of the promise; and therefore Tertullian calls infants, "designatos sanctitatis ac per hoc etiam salutis,—the candidates of holiness and salvation, those that are designed to it." But he that, whenever the word 'children' is used in Scripture, shall by 'children' understand infants, must needs believe that in all Israel there were no men, but all were infants: and if that had been true, it had been the greater wonder they should overcome the Anakims, and beat the king of Moab, and march so far, and discourse so well, for they were all called the 'children of Israel.'

20. And for the allegation of St. Paul, that infants are holy if their parents be faithful,—it signifies nothing but that they are holy by designation, just as Jeremy and John Bap-

tist were sanctified in their mothers' womb, that is, they were appointed and designed for holy ministries, but had not received the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost, for all that sanctification: and just so the children of Christian parents are sanctified, that is, designed to the service of Jesus Christ, and the future participation of the promises.

21. And as the promise appertains not (for aught appears) to infants, in that capacity and consistence, but only by the title of their being reasonable creatures, and when they come to that act of which by nature they have the faculty; so if it did, yet baptism is not the means of conveying the Holy Ghost. For that which Peter says, "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost," signifies no more than this,—First be baptized, and then, by imposition of the apostles' hands (which was another mystery and rite), ye shall receive the promise of the Father.—And this is nothing but an insinuation of the rite of confirmation, as is to this sense expounded by divers ancient authors; and in ordinary ministry the effect of it is not bestowed upon any unbaptized persons, for it is in order next after baptism: and upon this ground Peter's argument in the case of Cornelius was concluding enough 'à majori ad minus;' thus the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon him and his family, which gift, by ordinary ministry, was consequent to baptism (not as the effect is to the cause or to the proper instrument, but as a consequent is to an antecedent in a chain of causes accidentally and by positive institution depending upon each other); God by that miracle did give testimony, that the persons of the men were in great dispositions towards heaven, and therefore were to be admitted to those rites which are the ordinary inlets into the kingdom of heaven. But then from hence to argue that wherever there is a capacity of receiving the same grace, there also the same sign is to be ministered, and from hence to infer pædo-baptism, is an argument very fallacious upon several grounds. First, because baptism is not the sign of the Holy Ghost, but by another mystery it was conveyed ordinarily, and extraordinarily it was conveyed independently from any mystery; and so the argument goes upon a wrong supposition. Secondly, if the supposition were true, the proposition built upon it is false; for they that are capable of the same grace, are not always capable of the same sign:

for women under the law of Moses, although they were capable of the righteousness of faith, yet they were not capable of the sign of circumcision. For God does not always convey his graces in the same manner, but to some mediately, to others immediately; and there is no better instance in the world of it than the gift of the Holy Ghost,—which is the thing now instanced in this contestation: for it is certain in Scripture, that it was ordinarily given by imposition of hands, and that, after baptism (and when this came into an ordinary ministry, it was called, by the ancient Church, chrism or confirmation); but yet it was given sometimes without imposition of hands, as at Pentecost, and to the family of Cornelius; sometimes before baptism, sometimes after, sometimes in conjunction with it.

22. And after all this, lest these arguments should not ascertain their cause, they fall on complaining against God, and will not be content with God unless they may baptize their children, but take exceptions that God did more for the children of the Jews. But why so? Because God made a covenant with their children actually as infants, and consigned it by circumcision. Well; so he did with our children too in their proportion. He made a covenant of spiritual promises on his part, and spiritual and real services on ours; and this pertains to children when they are capable, but made with them as soon as they are alive, and yet not so as with the Jews' babes: for as their rite consigned them actually, so it was a national and temporal blessing and covenant, as a separation of them from the portion of the nations, a marking them for a peculiar people; and therefore while they were in the wilderness and separate from the commixture of all people, they were not at all circumcised; but as that rite did seal the righteousness of faith, so, by virtue of its adherence, and remanence in their flesh, it did that work when the children came to age. But in Christian infants, the case is otherwise: for the new covenant, being established upon better promises, is not only to better purposes, but also in distinct manner to be understood; when their spirits are as receptive of a spiritual act or impress as the bodies of Jewish children were of the sign of circumcision, then it is to be consigned. But this business is quickly at an end, by saying, that God hath done no less for ours

than for their children; for he will do the mercies of a father and creator to them, and he did no more to the other. But he hath done more to ours, for he hath made a covenant with them, and built it upon promises of the greatest concernment; he did not so to them. But then for the other part, which is the main of the argument, that unless this mercy be consigned by baptism, as good not at all in respect of us, because we want the comfort of it; this is the greatest vanity in the world. For when God hath made a promise pertaining also to our children (for so our adversaries contend, and we also acknowledge in its true sense), shall not this promise, this word of God, be of sufficient truth, certainty, and efficacy, to cause comfort, unless we tempt God and require a sign of him? May not Christ say to these men, as sometime to the Jews, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, but no sign shall be given unto it?" But the truth of it is, this argument is nothing but a direct quarrelling with God Almighty.

23. Now since there is no strength in the doctrinal part, the practice and precedents apostolical and ecclesiastical will be of less concernment, if they were true, as is pretended,—because actions apostolical are not always rules for ever: it might be fit for them to do it 'pro loco et tempore,' as divers others of their institutions, but yet no engagement passed thence upon following ages; for it might be convenient at that time, in the new spring of Christianity, and till they had engaged a considerable party, by that means to make them parties against the Gentiles' superstition, and by way of preoccupation, to ascertain them to their own sect when they came to be men; or for some other reason not transmitted to us, because the question of fact itself is not sufficiently determined. For the insinuation of that precept of baptizing all nations, of which children certainly are a part, does as little advantage as any of the rest, because other parallel expressions of Scripture do determine and expound themselves to a sense that includes not all persons absolutely, but of a capable condition; as "Adorate eum, omnes gentes; et psallite Deo, omnes nationes terræ," and divers more.

24. As for the conjecture concerning the family of Stephanas, at the best it is but a conjecture; and besides that

it is not proved that there were children in the family; yet if that were granted, it follows not that they were baptized, because by 'whole families' in Scripture is meant all persons of reason and age within the family; for it is said of the ruler at Capernaum, "that he believed and all his house."[1] Now you may also suppose that in his house were little babes, that is likely enough; and you may suppose that they did believe too before they could understand, but that is not so likely: and then the argument from baptizing of Stephanas' household may be allowed just as probable. But this is unmanlike to build upon such slight airy conjectures.

25. But tradition by all means must supply the place of Scripture, and there is pretended a tradition apostolical, that infants were baptized. But at this we are not much moved; for we, who rely upon the written word of God as sufficient to establish all true religion, do not value the allegation of traditions: and however the world goes, none of the reformed churches can pretend this argument against this opinion, because they who reject tradition when it is against them, must not pretend it at all for them. But if we should allow the topic to be good, yet how will it be verified? For so far as it can yet appear, it relies wholly upon the testimony of Origen, for from him Austin had it. For, as for the testimony pretended out of Justin Martyr, it is to no purpose; because the book from whence the words are cited, is not Justin's, who was before Origen, and yet he cites Origen and Irenæus. But who please may see it sufficiently condemned by Sixtus Senensis, "Biblioth. Sanct." lib. 4, verbo *Justinus*. And as for the testimony of Origen, we know nothing of it; for every heretic and interested person did interpolate all his works so much, that we cannot discern which are his and which not. Now a tradition apostolical, if it be not consigned with a fuller testimony than of one person whom all after-ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain so little reputation amongst those who know that things have, upon greater authority, pretended to derive from the apostles, and yet falsely,—that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak, that shall be determined by so weak probation in matters of so great concernment. And the truth of the business is, as there was no command of Scripture to

[1] John, iv. 53.

oblige children to the susception of it, so the necessity of pædo-baptism was not determined in the Church till in the eighth age after Christ; but in the year 418, in the Milevitan council, a provincial of Africa, there was a canon made for pædo-baptism; never till then. I grant it was practised in Africa before that time, and they or some of them thought well of it; and though that be no argument for us to think so, yet none of them did ever before pretend it to be necessary, none to have been a precept of the Gospel. St. Austin was the first that ever preached it to be absolutely necessary; and it was in his heat and anger against Pelagius, who had warmed and chafed him so in that question, that it made him innovate in other doctrines possibly of more concernment than this. And although this was practised anciently in Africa, yet that it was without an opinion of necessity, and not often there, not at all in other places,—we have the testimony of the learned pædo-baptist Ludovicus Vives, who, in his "Annotations upon St. Austin de Civit. Dei," affirms, "Neminem nisi adultum antiquitus solere baptizari."[k]

26. But, besides that the tradition cannot be proved to be apostolical, we have very good evidence from antiquity, that it was the opinion of the Primitive Church that infants ought not to be baptized: and this is clear in the sixth canon of the Council of Neocæsarea. The words are these: Περὶ κυοφορούσης, ὅτι δεῖ φωτίζεσθαι, ὁπότε βούλεται· οὐδὲν γὰρ κοινωνεῖ ἡ τίκτουσα τῷ τικτομένῳ, διὰ τὸ ἑκάστου ἰδίαν τὴν προαίρεσιν τὴν ἐν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ δείκνυσθαι. The sense is this, "A woman with child may be baptized when she please; for her baptism concerns not the child." The reason of the connexion of the parts of that canon is in the following words, "Because every one in that confession is to give a demonstration of his own choice and election." Meaning plainly, that if the baptism of the mother did also pass upon the child, it were not fit for a pregnant woman to receive baptism; because in that sacrament there being a confession of faith, which confession supposes understanding and free choice, it is not reasonable the child should be consigned with such a mystery, since it cannot do any act of choice or understanding. And to this purpose are the words of Balsamon;[l] speaking of this decree, and of infants unborn not to be

[k] Lib. i. c. 27.

[l] In compend. Can. tit. 4,

baptized, he says, Οὐ δύναται φωτισθῆναι διὰ τὸ μηκέτι εἰς φῶς ἐλθεῖν, μηδὲ προαίρεσιν ἔχειν τῆς ὁμολογίας τοῦ θείου βαπτίσματος· —"The unborn babe is not to be baptized, because he neither is come to light, nor can he make choice of the confession, that is, of the articles to be confessed, in Divine baptism." To the same sense are the words of Zonaras: Ἔμβρυον χρήζει βαπτίσματος, ὅτε προαιρεῖσθαι δυνήσεται·—"The embryo or unborn babe does then need baptism, when he can choose." The canon speaks reason, and it intimates a practice which was absolutely universal in the Church, of interrogating the catechumens concerning the articles of creed. Which is one argument, that either they did not admit infants to baptism; or that they did prevaricate egregiously in asking questions of them, who themselves knew were not capable of giving answer. But the former was the more probable, according to the testimony of Walafridus Strabo: "Notandum deinde, primis temporibus, illis solummodo baptismi gratiam dari solitam, qui et corporis et mentis integritate jam ad hoc pervenerunt, ut scire et intelligere possent, quid emolumenti in baptismo consequendum, quid confitendum atque credendum, quid postremò renatis in Christo esset servandum:[m]— It is to be noted, that in those first times, the grace of baptism was wont to be given to those only who by their integrity of mind and body were arrived to this, that they could know and understand what profit was to be had by baptism, what was to be confessed and believed in baptism, and what is the duty of them who are born again in Christ."

27. But to supply their incapacity by the answer of a godfather, is but the same unreasonableness acted with a worse circumstance: and there is no sensible account can be given of it.[n] For that which some imperfectly murmur concerning stipulations civil performed by tutors in the name of their pupils, is an absolute vanity. For what if, by positive constitution of the Romans, such solemnities of law are required in all stipulations, and by indulgence are permitted in the case of a notable benefit accruing to minors,— must God be tied, and Christian religion transact her mysteries, by proportion and compliance with the law of the

[m] De Rebus Eccles. c. xxvi.

[n] Quidni necesse est (sic legit Franc. Junius in notis ad Tertul.) sponsores etiam periculo ingeri, qui et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possint, et proventu malæ indolis falli?— *Tertul.* lib. de Baptis. cap. 18.

Romans? I know God might, if he would, have appointed godfathers to give answer in behalf of the children, and to be *fidejussores* for them; but we cannot find any authority or ground that he hath: and if he had, then it is to be supposed he would have given them commission to have transacted the solemnity with better circumstances, and given answers with more truth. For the question is asked of believing in the present. And if the godfathers answer in the name of the child, "I do believe," it is notorious they speak false and ridiculously: for the infant is not capable of believing; and if he were, he were also capable of dissenting, and how then do they know his mind? And therefore Tertullian[o] gives advice that the baptism of infants should be deferred till they could give an account of their faith. And the same also is the counsel of Gregory,[p] bishop of Nazianzum, although he allows them to hasten it in case of necessity: for though his reason taught him what was fit, yet he was overborne with the practice and opinion of his age, which began to bear too violently upon him; and yet in another place he makes mention of some to whom baptism was not administered διὰ νηπιότητα,—'by reason of infancy.' To which if we add, that the parents of St. Austin, St. Jerome, and St. Ambrose, although they were Christian, yet did not baptize their children before they were thirty years of age; and St. Chrysostom, who was instituted and bred up in religion by the famous and beloved bishop Miletius, was yet not baptized till after he was twenty years of age; and Gregory Nazianzen, though he was the son of a bishop, yet was not christened till he came to man's age;—it will be very considerable in the example, and of great efficacy for destroying the supposed necessity or derivation from the apostles.

28. But however, it is against the perpetual analogy of Christ's doctrine to baptize infants: for besides that Christ never gave any precept to baptize them, nor ever himself nor his apostles (that appears) did baptize any of them; all that either he or his apostles said concerning it, requires such previous dispositions to baptism, of which infants are not

[o] Lib. de Baptis. prope finem cap. xviii. Itaque pro personæ cujusque conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est, præcipuè tamen circa parvulos—Fiant Christiani, cum Christum nôsse potuerint.

[p] Orat. 40. quæst. in S. Baptisma.

capable,—and these are faith and repentance. And not to instance in those innumerable places that require faith before this sacrament, there needs no more but this one saying of our blessed Saviour, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned:"[q] plainly thus, faith and baptism in conjunction will bring a man to heaven; but if he have not faith, baptism shall do him no good. So that if baptism be necessary then, so is faith, and much more: for want of faith damns absolutely; it is not said so of the want of baptism. Now if this decretory sentence be to be understood of persons of age, and if children by such an answer (which indeed is reasonable enough) be excused from the necessity of faith, the want of which regularly does damn;—then it is sottish to say, the same incapacity of reason and faith shall not excuse from the actual susception of baptism, which is less necessary, and to which faith and many other acts are necessary predispositions, when it is reasonably and humanly received. The conclusion is, that baptism is also to be deferred till the time of faith: and whether infants have faith or no, is a question to be disputed by persons that care not how much they say, nor how little they prove.

29. First, Personal and actual faith they have none; for they have no acts of understanding: and besides, how can any man know that they have, since he never saw any sign of it, neither was he told so by any one that could tell? Secondly, Some say they have imputative faith: but then so let the sacrament be too: that is, if they have the parents' faith or the Church's, then so let baptism be imputed also by derivation from them; that as in their mothers' womb, and while they hang on their breasts, they live upon their mothers' nourishment, so they may upon the baptism of their parents or their mother, the Church. For since faith is necessary to the susception of baptism (and themselves confess it, by striving to find out new kinds of faith to daub the matter up), such as the faith is, such must be the sacrament; for there is no proportion between an actual sacrament and an imputative faith, this being in immediate and necessary order to that. And whatsoever can be said to take off from the necessity of actual faith, all that and much more may be said to excuse from the actual susception of baptism. Thirdly,

[q] Mark, xvi. 16.

the first of these devices was that of Luther and his scholars, the second of Calvin and his: and yet there is a third device, which the Church of Rome teaches, and that is, that infants have habitual faith. But who told them so? how can they prove it? what revelation or reason teaches any such thing? Are they by this habit so much as disposed to an actual belief without a new master? Can an infant, sent into a Mahometan province, be more confident for Christianity when he comes to be a man, than if he had not been baptized? Are there any acts, precedent, concomitant, or consequent to this pretended habit? This strange invention is absolutely without art, without Scripture, reason, or authority. But the men are to be excused, unless there were a better. But for all these stratagems, the argument now alleged against the baptism of infants is demonstrative and unanswerable.

30. To which also this consideration may be added, that if baptism be necessary to the salvation of infants, upon whom is the imposition laid? to whom is the command given? to the parents or to the children? Not to the children, for they are not capable of a law: not to the parents, for then God hath put the salvation of innocent babes into the power of others, and infants may be damned for their fathers' carelessness or malice. It follows, that it is not necessary at all to be done to them, to whom it cannot be prescribed as a law, and in whose behalf it cannot be reasonably intrusted to others with the appendant necessity: and if it be not necessary, it is certain it is not reasonable, and most certain it is nowhere in terms prescribed: and therefore it is to be presumed that it ought to be understood and administered according as other precepts are, with reference to the capacity of the subject, and the reasonableness of the thing.

31. For I consider, that the baptizing of infants does rush us upon such inconveniences, which in other questions we avoid like rocks: which will appear if we discourse thus.

Either baptism produces spiritual effects, or it produces them not. If it produces not any, why is such contention about it? what are we the nearer heaven if we are baptized? and if it be neglected, what are we the further off? But if (as without all peradventure all the pædo-baptists will say) baptism does do a work upon the soul, producing spiritual benefits and advantages, these advantages are produced by

the external work of the sacrament alone, or by that as it is helped by the co-operation and predispositions of the suscipient.

If by the external work of the sacrament alone, how does this differ from the 'opus operatum' of the papists, save that it is worse? For they say, the sacrament does not produce its effect but in a suscipient disposed by all requisites and due preparatives of piety, faith, and repentance; though in a subject so disposed they say the sacrament by its own virtue does it: but this opinion says, it does it of itself, without the help, or so much as the coexistence, of any condition but the mere reception.

But if the sacrament does not do its work alone, but 'per modum recipientis,' according to the predispositions of the suscipient,—then, because infants can neither hinder it nor do any thing to further it, it does them no benefit at all. And if any man runs for succour to that exploded *κρησφύγετον*, that infants have faith, or any other inspired habit of I know not what or how,—we desire no more advantage in the world, than that they are constrained to an answer without revelation, against reason, common sense, and all the experience in the world.

The sum of the argument, in short, is this, though under another representment.

Either baptism is a mere ceremony, or it implies a duty on our part. If it be a ceremony only, how does it sanctify us, or 'make the comers thereunto perfect?' If it implies a duty on our part, how then can children receive it, who cannot do duty at all?

And indeed this way of ministration makes baptism to be wholly an outward duty, a work of the law, a carnal ordinance; it makes us adhere to the letter, without regard of the Spirit, to be satisfied with shadows, to return to bondage, to relinquish the mysteriousness, the substance, and spirituality of the Gospel. Which argument is of so much the more consideration, because, under the spiritual covenant, or the Gospel of grace, if the mystery goes not before the symbol (which it does when the symbols are seals and consignations of the grace, as it is said the sacraments are), yet it always accompanies it, but never follows in order of time. And this is clear in the perpetual analogy of Holy Scripture.

For baptism is never propounded, mentioned, or enjoined, as a means of remission of sins or of eternal life, but something of duty, choice, and sanctity, are joined with it, in order to production of the end so mentioned. "Know ye not, that as many as are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into his death?"[q] There are the mystery and the symbol together, and declared to be perpetually united. "Οσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν,—"All of us who were baptized" into one, were baptized into the other; not only into the name of Christ, but into his death also. But the meaning of this, as it is explained in the following words of St. Paul, makes much for our purpose: for to be baptized into his death, signifies "to be buried with him in baptism, that as Christ rose from the dead, we also should walk in newness of life:"[r] that is the full mystery of baptism. For being baptized into his death, or, which is all one, in the next words, ἐν ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ,—"into the likeness of his death,"[s] cannot go alone; "if we be so planted into Christ, we shall be partakers of his resurrection:" and that is not here instanced in precise reward, but in exact duty; for all this is nothing but "crucifixion of the old man, a destroying the body of sin, that we no longer serve sin."[t]

This, indeed, is truly to be baptized both in the symbol and the mystery. Whatsoever is less than this, is but the symbol only, a mere ceremony, an 'opus operatum,' a dead letter, an empty shadow, an instrument without an agent to manage or force to actuate it.

Plainer yet: "Whosoever are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, have put on the new man:" but to put on this new man, is "to be formed in righteousness, and holiness, and truth." This whole argument are the very words of St. Paul. The major proposition is dogmatically determined, Gal. iii. 27; the minor, in Ephes. iv. 24. The conclusion then is obvious, that they who are not 'formed new in righteousness, and holiness, and truth,' they who, remaining in the present incapacities, cannot 'walk in the newness of life,' —they have not been 'baptized into Christ:' and then they have but one member of the distinction, used by St. Peter,[u] they have that baptism 'which is a putting away the filth of

[q] Rom. vi. 3. [r] Verse 4. [s] Verse 5. [t] Verse 6. [u] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

the flesh,' but they have not that baptism 'which is the answer of a good conscience towards God,' which is the only 'baptism that saves us.' And this is the case of children. And then the case is thus:

As infants by the force of nature cannot put themselves into a supernatural condition (and therefore, say the pædobaptists, they need baptism to put them into it); so if they be baptized before the use of reason, before the 'works of the Spirit,' before the operations of grace, before they can throw off 'the works of darkness, and live in righteousness, and newness of life,'—they are never the nearer. From the pains of hell they shall be saved by the mercies of God and their own innocence, though they die 'in puris naturalibus;' and baptism will carry them no further. For that 'baptism that saves us' is not the only 'washing with water,' of which only children are capable, 'but the answer of a good conscience towards God,' of which they are not capable till the use of reason, till they know to choose the good and refuse the evil.

And from thence I consider anew, that all vows made by persons under others' names, stipulations made by minors, are not valid, till they, by a supervening act after they are of sufficient age, do ratify them. Why then may not infants as well make the vow 'de novo,' as 'de novo' ratify that, which was made for them 'ab antiquo,' when they come to years of choice? If the infant vow be invalid till the manly confirmation, why were it not as good they stayed to make it till that time, before which if they do make it, it is to no purpose?[x] This would be considered.

32. And in conclusion, our way is the surer way; for not to baptize children till they can give an account of their faith, is the most proportionable to an act of reason and humanity, and it can have no danger in it. For to say, that infants may be damned for want of baptism (a thing which is not in their power to acquire, they being persons not yet capable of a law), is to affirm that of God which we dare not say of any wise and good man. Certainly it is much derogatory to God's justice, and a plain defiance to the infinite reputation of his goodness.

33. And, therefore, whoever will pertinaciously persist in

[x] Vide Erasmum in præfat. ad Annotat. in Matt.

this opinion of the pædo-baptists, and practise it accordingly, they pollute the blood of the everlasting testament; they dishonour and make a pageantry of the sacrament; they ineffectually represent a sepulture into the death of Christ, and please themselves in a sign without effect, making baptism like the fig-tree in the Gospel, full of leaves but no fruit; and they invocate the Holy Ghost in vain, doing as if one should call upon him to illuminate a stone or a tree.

34. Thus far the anabaptists may argue; and men have disputed against them with so much weakness and confidence, that we may say of them, as St. Gregory Nazianzen observes of the case of the Church in his time; *Οὐκ ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν δόγμασι τὴν ἰσχὺν ἔχοντες, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέρων σαθροῖς ταύτην θηρεύοντες*, &c.—They have been encouraged in their error more by the accidental advantages we have given them by our weak arguings, than by any excellence of their wit, and (much less) any advantage of their cause." It concerned not the present design of this book to inquire, whether these men speak true or no: for if they speak probably, or so as may deceive them that are no fools, it is argument sufficient to persuade us to pity the erring man that is deceived without design: and that is all that I intended. But because all men will not understand my purpose, or think my meaning innocent, unless I answer the arguments which I have made or gathered for mine and their adversaries;—although I say it be nothing to the purpose of my book, which was only to represent, that even in a wrong cause there may be invincible causes of deception to innocent and unfortunate persons, and of this truth the anabaptists in their question of pædobaptism is a very great instance;—yet I will rather choose to offend the rules of art, than not to fulfil all the requisites of charity: I have chosen therefore to add some animadversions upon the anabaptists' plea, upon all that is material, and which can have any considerable effect in the question. For though I have used this art and stratagem of peace justly, by representing the enemy's strength to bring the other party to thoughts of charity and kind comportments; yet I could not intend to discourage the right side, or to make either a mutiny or defection in the armies of Israel. I do not, as the spies from Canaan, say that these men are Anakims, and the city walls reach up to heaven, and there are giants in the

land: I know they are not insuperable, but they are like the blind and the lame set before a wall, that a weak man can leap over, and a single troop armed with wisdom and truth can beat all their guards. But yet I think that he said well and wisely to Charles the fighting duke of Burgundy, that told him that the Switzers' strength was not so to be despised, but that an honourable peace and a Christian usage of them were better than a cruel and a bloody war. The event of that battle told all the world, that no enemy is to be despised and rendered desperate at the same time; and that there are but few causes in the world but they do sometimes meet with witty advocates, and in themselves put on such semblances of truth, as will, if not make the victory uncertain, yet make peace more safe and prudent, and mutual charity to be the best defence.

And first, I do not pretend to say, that every argument brought by good men and wise in a right cause, must needs be demonstrative. The Divinity of the eternal Son of God is a truth of as great concernment and as great certainty, as any thing that ever was disputed in the Christian Church; and yet he that reads the writings of the fathers, and the acts of councils convened about that great question, will find that all the armour is not proof which is used in a holy war. For that seems to one, which is not so to another; and when a man hath one sufficient reason to secure him and make him confident, every thing seems to him to speak the same sense, though to an adversary it does not: for the one observes the similitude, and pleaseth himself; the other watches only the dissonances, and gets advantage; because one line of likeness will please a believing willing man, but one will not do the work; and where many dissimilitudes can be observed, and but one similitude, it were better to let the shadow alone than hazard the substance. And it is to be observed, that heretics and misbelievers do apply themselves rather to disable truth than directly to establish their error: and every argument they wrest from the hand of their adversaries, is to them a double purchase; it takes from the other and makes him less, and makes himself greater: the way to spoil a strong man, is to take from him the armour in which he trusted: and when this adversary hath espied a weak part in any discourse, he presently concludes that the cause is no stronger,

and reckons his victories by the colours that he takes, though they signified nothing to the strength of the cause. And this is the main way of proceeding in this question: for they rather endeavour to shew that we cannot demonstrate our part of the question, than that they can prove theirs. And as it is indeed easier to destroy than to build, so it is more agreeable to the nature and to the design of heresy: and therefore it were well that in this and in other questions where there are watchful adversaries, we should fight as Gideon did with three hundred hardy brave fellows, that would stand against all violence, rather than to make a noise with rams' horns and broken pitchers, like the men at the siege of Jericho. And though it is not to be expected that all arguments should be demonstrative in a true cause, yet it were well if the generals of the Church, which the Scripture affirms are terrible as an army with banners, should not, by sending out weak parties which are easily beaten, weaken their own army, and give confidence to the enemy.

Secondly: although it is hard to prove a negative, and it is not in many cases to be imposed upon a litigant; yet when the affirmative is received and practised, whoever will disturb the actual persuasion must give his reason, and offer proof for his own doctrine, or let me alone with mine. For the reason why negatives are hard to prove, is because they have no positive cause; but as they have no being, so they have no reason: but then also they are first, and before affirmatives, that is, such which are therefore to prevail, because nothing can be said against them. Darkness is before light, and things are not before they are: and though to prove that things are, something must be said; yet to prove they are not, nothing is to be alleged but that they are not, and no man can prove they are. But when an affirmative hath entered and prevailed, because no effect can be without some positive cause, therefore this which came in upon some cause or other, must not be sent away without cause: and because the negative is in this case later than the affirmative, it must enter as the affirmatives do, when they happen to be later than the negative. Add to this, that for the introduction of a negative against the possession of a prevailing affirmative, it is not enough to invalidate the arguments of the affirmative, by making it appear they are not demonstrative: for

although that might have been sufficient to hinder its first entry, yet it is not enough to throw it out, because it hath gotten strength and reasonableness by long custom and dwelling upon the minds of men, and hath some forces beyond what it derives from the first causes of its introduction. And, therefore, whoever will persuade men to quit their long persuasions and their consonant practices, must not tell them that such persuasions are not certain, and that they cannot prove such practices to be necessary; but that the doctrine is false, against some other revealed truth which they admit, and the practice evil; not only useless, but dangerous or criminal. So that the anabaptists cannot acquit themselves and promote their cause, by going about to invalidate our arguments, unless they do not only weaken our affirmative, by taking away not one or two, but all the confidences of its strength, but also make their own negative to include a duty, or its enemy to be guilty of a crime. And therefore if it were granted, that we cannot prove the baptism of infants to be necessary, and that they could speak probably against all the arguments of the right believers; yet it were intolerable that they should be attended to, unless they pretend, and make their pretence good, that they teach piety, and duty, and necessity: for nothing less than these can make recompense for so violent, so great an inroad and rape upon the persuasions of men. Whether the anabaptists do so or no, will be considered in the sequel.

Thirdly: these arguments, which are in this section urged in behalf of the anabaptists, their persons, I mean, finally, not their cause at all but in order to their persons, can do the less hurt, because they rely upon our grounds, not upon theirs; that is, they are intended to persuade us to a charitable comport towards the men, but not at all to persuade their doctrine. For it is remarkable that none of them have made use of this way of arguing since the publication of these "Adversaria;" and of some things they can never make use. As in that exposition of the words of St. Peter, "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost;" which is expounded to be meant not in baptism, but in confirmation: which is a rite the anabaptists allow not, and therefore they cannot make use of any such exposition, which supposes a Divine institution of that which they at no hand admit. And so it

is in divers other particulars; as any wary person, that is cautious he be not deluded by any weak and plausible pretence of theirs, may easily observe.

But, after all, the arguments for the baptism of children are firm and valid, and though shaken by the adverse plea, yet as trees that stand in the face of storms take the surer root, so will the right reasons of the right believers, if they be represented with their proper advantages.

Ad 3. and 13.—The first argument is the circumcising of children, which we say does rightly infer the baptizing them: the anabaptist says no; because, admit that circumcision were the type of baptism, yet it follows not that the circumstances of one must infer the same circumstances in the other; which he proves by many instances; and so far he says true. And therefore, if there were no more in the argument than can be inferred from the type to the antitype, both the supposition and the superstructure would be infirm: because it is uncertain whether circumcision be a type of baptism; and if it were granted, it cannot infer equal circumstances. But then this argument goes further, and to other and more material purposes, even to the overthrow of their chief pretension. For "circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith:" and if infants, who have no faith, yet can by a ceremony be admitted into the covenant of faith, as St. Paul contends that all the circumcised were, and it is certain of infants that they were reckoned amongst the Lord's people as soon as they were circumcised; then it follows, that the great pretence of the anabaptists, that for want of faith infants are incapable of the sacrament, comes to nothing. For if infants were admitted into the covenant of faith by a ceremony, before they could enter by choice and reason, by faith and obedience; then so they may now, their great and only pretence notwithstanding. Now, whereas the anabaptist says, that in the admission of the Jewish infants to circumcision, and of Christian infants to baptism, there is this difference, that circumcision imprints a character on the flesh, but baptism does not; circumcision had no word added, but baptism hath; and therefore, infants were capable of the former, but not of the latter; for they might be cut with the circumcising-stone, but they cannot be instructed with the word of baptism: in that there was a

character left, by which they might be instructed when they come to age, but in baptism there is no character, and the word they understand not; therefore, that was to purpose, but this is not. I answer, that this is something to the circumstance of the sacraments, but nothing to the substance of the argument. For if the covenant of faith can belong to infants, then it is certain they can have the benefit of faith before they have the grace; that is, God will do them benefit before they can do him service: and that is no new thing in religion that God should love us first. But then, that God is not as much beforehand with Christian as with Jewish infants, is a thing which can never be believed by them who understand that, in the Gospel, God opened all his treasures of mercies, and unsealed the fountain itself; whereas before he poured forth only rivulets of mercy and comfort. That "circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith," St. Paul affirms; that so also is baptism (if it be any thing at all) the anabaptists must needs confess, because they refuse to give baptism to them who have not faith, and make it useless to them, as being a seal without a deed. But then the argument is good upon its first grounds. But then for the little repartees but now mentioned, that circumcision imprints a character, but baptism does not; that baptism hath a word, but circumcision had none; they are just nothing to the purpose. For as that character imprinted on the infants' flesh would have been nothing of instruction to them unless there had been a word added, that is, unless they had been told the meaning of it, when they came to be men; so neither will the word added to baptism be of use either to men or children, unless there be a character upon their spirits imprinted, when or before they come to the use of reason, by the holy Spirit of God: but therefore, as the anabaptists would have our infants stay from the sacrament till they can understand the word, so also might the imprinting of a character on the flesh of the Jewish infants have been deferred till the word should be added, that is, till they could understand the word, or declaration of the meaning of that character, without which they could not understand its meaning. The case is equal. In the Jewish infants, the character was before the word; in the Christian infants, the word is before the character: but neither that nor this alone could do all the work of the

sacrament; but yet it could do some, and when they could be conjoined, the office was completed. But therefore, as the infants under Moses might have that, which to them was an insignificant character; so may the infants under Christ have water and a word, whose meaning these shall understand as soon as those could understand the meaning of the character. So that these pretended differences signify nothing; and, if they did, yet they are not certainly true, but rather certainly false: for although the Scriptures mention not any form of words used in the Mosaic sacraments, yet the Jews' books record them. And then, for the other, that there is no character imprinted in baptism it is impossible they should reasonably affirm, because it being spiritual is also undiscernible, and cometh not by observation. And although there is no permanent or inherent quality imprinted by the Spirit in baptism that we know of, and therefore, will not affirm (but neither can they know it is not, and therefore, they ought not to deny, much less to establish, any proposition upon it); yet it is certain that, although no quality be imprinted before they come to the use of reason, yet a relation is contracted, and then the children have title to the promises, and are reckoned 'in Christi censu,—in Christ's account,' they are members of his body: and though they can as yet do no duty, yet God can do them a favour: although they cannot yet perform a condition, yet God can make a promise; and though the anabaptists will be so bold as to restrain infants, yet they cannot restrain God, and therefore, the sacrament is not to be denied to them. For although they can do nothing, yet they can receive something; they can by this sacrament as really be admitted into the covenant of faith, even before they have the grace of faith, as the infants of the Jews could: and if they be admitted to this covenant, they are children of faithful Abraham, and heirs of the promise. All the other particulars of their answer to the argument taken from circumcision are wholly impertinent: for they are intended to prove that circumcision, being a type of baptism, cannot prove that the same circumstances are to be observed: all which I grant. For circumcision was no type of baptism, but was a sacrament of initiation to the Mosaic covenant; and so is baptism, of initiation to the evangelical: circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and so

is baptism; but they are both but rites and sacraments, and therefore cannot have the relation of type and antitype; they are both but external ministries fitted to the several periods of the Law and the Gospel, with this only difference, that circumcision gave place to, was supplied and succeeded to by, baptism. And as those persons who could not be circumcised, I mean the females, yet were baptized, as is notorious in the Jews' books and story, and by that rite were admitted to the same promises and covenant as if they had been circumcised: so much more, when males and females are only baptized, baptism must be admitted and allowed to consign all that covenant of faith which circumcision did, and therefore, to be dispensed to all them who can partake of that covenant, as infants did then, and therefore, certainly may now. So that, in short, we do not infer that infants are to receive this sacrament, because they received that; but because the benefit and secret purpose of both is the same in some main regards: and if they were capable of the blessing then, so they are now; and if want of faith hindered not the Jewish babes from entering into the covenant of faith, then neither shall it hinder the Christian babes: and if they can and do receive the benefit, for which the ceremony was appointed as a sign and conduit, why they should not be admitted to the ceremony is so very a trifle, that it deserves not to become the entertainment of a fancy in the sober time of the day, but must go into the portion of dreams and illusions of the night.

Ad 4.—And as ill success will they have with the other answers. For although we intend the next argument but as a reasonable inducement of the baptizing infants by way of proportion to the other treatments they received from Christ; yet this probability, notwithstanding all that is said against it, may be a demonstration. For if infants can be brought to Christ by the charitable ministries of others, when they cannot come themselves; if Christ did give them his blessing, and great expressions of his love to them, when they could not by any act of their own dispose themselves to it; if the disciples, who then knew nothing of this secret, were reproved for hindering them to be brought, and upon the occasion of this a precept established for ever, that children should be suffered to 'come to him;' and though they were brought

by others, yet it was all one as if they had 'come' themselves, and was so called, so expounded; and if the reason why they should be suffered to come, is such a thing as must at least suppose them capable of the greatest blessing: there is no peradventure, but this will amount to as much as the grace of baptism will come to. For if we regard the outward ministry, that Christ did take them in his arms and lay his hands upon them, is as much as if the apostles should take them in their arms, and lay water upon them: if we regard the effect of it, that Christ blessed them, is as much as if his ministers prayed over them: if we regard the capacity of infants, it is such that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them; that is, they also can be admitted to the covenant of the Gospel, for that is the least signification of "the kingdom of heaven;" or they shall be partakers of heaven which is the greatest signification, and includes all the intermedial ways thither, according to the capacity of the suscipients: if we regard the acceptance of the action and entertainment of the person, it is as great as Christ any where expresses: if we regard the precept, it cannot be supposed to expire in the persons of those little ones which were then brought, for they were come already; and though they were tacitly reproved who offered to hinder them, yet the children were present; and therefore, it must relate to others, to all infants, that they should for ever be brought to Christ. And this is also to be gathered from τοιούτων,—"of such," not τούτων, —"of these;" for these are but a few, but "the kingdom of God is of such" as these, who are now brought; children make up a great portion of it, and the other portion is made up by such who become like to these. And if the transcript belong to the kingdom, it were strange if the exemplar should not: if none can enter but they who are like children, it must be certain, that nothing can hinder the children. And, lastly, if we regard the doctrine which Christ established upon this action, it will finish the argument into a certain conclusion; "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein:" receive it as a little child receives it, that is, with innocence and without any let or hinderance. So that they, who receive it best, receive it but as little children: for they, being the first in the kind, are made the measure of all the rest; and if others shall be excluded for not being like these, it is certain these

are not to be excluded for not being like others; others are commanded to be like them in innocence, and that is sufficient to make them recipients of the Divine grace; but therefore, to make infants to be recipients, it is not required that they should have the use of reason. And we do not well consider that it is God who creates all our capacities of grace, and it is he who makes us able to receive what he intends to bestow, and nothing of ours can do it; no good actions can deserve any grace, much less the first grace, the grace of baptism; and all that men can do in the whole use of their reason and order of their life, is to return as much as they can to the innocence of their infancy; and prayer is but a seeking after pardon and grace, whereby we may stand as innocents before God,—and charity is but growing, and is here principally the extermination of all malice and envy,—and by alms (as Daniel advised to Nebuchadnezzar), we do but break off our sins,—and our health is but the expulsion of evil humours,—and our pleasure is but the removal of a pain,—and "optimus est qui minimis urgetur," and our best holiness is being like to infants: and therefore it is no wonder, if God made them the principals in this line, and loves them so well who are innocent of any consent to evil. And although they have done no good, yet they are all that which God loves, they are his image undefiled, unscratched, unbroken by any act or consent of their own: but then it were a very great wonder, if these, in whom God sees the work of his own hands, the image of his own essence, the purity of innocence, the capacities of glory, to whom his only Son gave such signal testimonies of his love, upon whom he bestowed a blessing, for whose sake he was much displeased when they were hindered to come, whom he declared the exemplar of those who should be saved, and the pattern and precedent of receiving his kingdom, to whom he imparted spiritual favours by a ceremony and a solemnity;—I say, it were a very great wonder that these should not receive the same favours in the way of ordinary establishment, who have the principal title, and did actually receive them in the extraordinary before the general appointment of the other. If there be any thing that can hinder them, it must be something without; for nothing within can hinder them to receive that, which others cannot receive but by being like them: and if any thing without does hinder them, it cannot expect to fare better than the

disciples, with whom Christ was much displeased. But of what can they now be hindered? Not of the grace of the sacrament; that is their own by way of eminent relation and propriety, "the kingdom of heaven is theirs," and of such as they are: not of the sacrament therefore or solemnity, for that is wholly for the other, and is nothing but an instrument, and hath a relative use, and none else; and as it is to no purpose to any man till they receive the grace of it, so it can be for no reason detained from them, who shall certainly have the grace, though they be forcibly deprived of the instrument. Unless, therefore, they who could come to Christ and were commanded to be brought to Christ, when he was upon earth, — may not, cannot come to him now that he is in heaven, and made our advocate and our gracious lord and king; — unless they who had the honour of a solemnity from the hands of Christ, may not be admitted to a ceremony from the hands of his servants; unless baptismal water be more than baptismal grace, and to be admitted into the Church be more than to be admitted to heaven; — it cannot with any plausible reason be pretended, that infants are to be excluded from this sacrament.

Ad 14.—Now as for the little things which the anabaptist murmurs against the first essay of this argument, they will quickly disappear. For whereas he says, — it were a better argument to say, that Christ blessed children and so dismissed them, but baptized them not, therefore infants are not to be baptized; — this is perfectly nothing, because Christ baptized none at all, men, women, nor children; and this will conclude against the baptism of men too as well as infants: and whereas it is hence inferred, that because Christ baptized them not, therefore he hath other ways of bringing them to heaven than by baptism; it is very true, but makes very much against them. For if God hath other ways of bringing them to heaven, who yet cannot believe, — if they can go to heaven without faith, why not to the font? if they can obtain that glorious end, in order to which the sacrament is appointed without the act of believing, then so also they may the means. But for what end, to what purpose, do they detain the water when they cannot keep back the Spirit? and why will they keep them from the Church, when they cannot keep them from God? and why do men require harder conditions of being baptized than of being saved? And then, that God

will by other means bring them to heaven if they have not baptism, is argument sufficient to prove that God's goodness prevails over the malice and ignorance of men, and that men contend more for shadows than for substances, and are more nice in their own ministrations than God is in the whole effusions of his bounty; and therefore that these disagreeing persons may do themselves injury, but, in the event of things, none to the children.

So that this argument, though slightly passed over by the anabaptists, yet is of very great persuasion in this article, and so used and relied upon by the Church of England in her office of baptism: and for that reason I have the more insisted upon it.

Ad 5.—The next argument without any alteration or addition, stands firm upon its own basis. Adam sinned, and left nakedness to descend upon his posterity, a relative guilt and a remaining misery; he left enough to kill us, but nothing to make us alive: he was the head of mankind in order to temporal felicity; but there was another head intended to be the representative of human nature to bring us to eternal; but the temporal we lost by Adam, and the eternal we could never receive from him, but from Christ only: from Adam we receive our nature, such as it is; but grace and truth come by Jesus Christ; Adam left us an imperfect nature, that tends to sin and death, but he left us nothing else; and therefore, to holiness and life we must enter from another principle. So that, besides the natural birth of infants, there must be something added, by which they must be reckoned in a new account: they must be born again, they must be reckoned in Christ, they must be adopted to the inheritance, and admitted to the promise, and entitled to the Spirit. Now that this is done ordinarily in baptism, is not to be denied: for therefore it is called λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας,—"the font or laver of regeneration;" it is the gate of the Church, it is the solemnity of our admission to the covenant evangelical: and if infants cannot go to heaven by the first or natural birth, then they must go by a second and supernatural: and since there is no other solemnity or sacrament, no way of being born again that we know of but by the ways of God's appointing, and he hath appointed baptism, and all that are born again are born this way, even men of reason who have

or can receive the Spirit, being to enter at the door of baptism;—it follows that infants also must enter here, or we cannot say that they are entered at all. And it is highly considerable, that whereas the anabaptist does clamorously and loudly call for a precept for children's baptism, this consideration does his work for him and us. He that shews the way, needs not bid you walk in it: and if there be but one door that stands open, and all must enter some way or other, it were a strange perverseness of argument to say, that none shall pass in at that door unless they come alone; and they that are brought, or they that lean on crutches or the shoulders of others, shall be excluded and undone for their felicity, and shall not receive help, because they have the greatest need of it. But these men use infants worse than the poor paralytic was treated at the pool of Bethesda: he could not be washed because he had none to put him in; but these men will not suffer any one to put them in, and until they can go in themselves, they shall never have the benefit of the Spirit's moving upon the waters.

Ad 15.—But the anabaptist to this discourse gives only this reply, that the supposition or ground is true, a man by Adam or any way of nature cannot go to heaven: neither men nor infants without the addition of some instrument or means of God's appointing; but this is to be understood to be true only ordinarily and regularly: but the case of infants is extraordinary, for they are not within the rule and the way of ordinary dispensation; and therefore, there being no command for them to be baptized, there will be some other way to supply it extraordinarily. To this I reply, that this is a plain begging of the question, or a denying the conclusion: for the argument being this, that baptism being the ordinary way or instrument of new birth, and admission to the promises evangelical and supernatural happiness, and we knowing of no other, and it being as necessary for infants as for men to enter some way or other, it must needs follow that they must go this way, because there is a way for all, and we know of no other but this; therefore the presumption lies on this, that infants must enter this way. They answer, that it is true in all but infants: the contradictory of which was the conclusion, and intended by the argument. For whereas they say God hath not appointed a rule and an order in this case of

infants, it is the thing in question, and therefore is not by direct negation to be opposed against the contrary argument. For I argue thus, wherever there is no extraordinary way appointed, there we must all go the ordinary; but for infants there is no extraordinary way appointed or declared, therefore they must go the ordinary: and he that hath without difference commanded that all nations should be baptized, hath without difference commanded all sorts of persons: and they may as well say, that they are sure God hath not commanded women to be baptized, or hermaphrodites, or eunuchs, or fools, or mutes, because they are not named in the precept; for sometimes in the census of a nation women are no more reckoned than children; and when the children of Israel coming out of Egypt were numbered, there was no reckoning either of women or children, and yet that was the number of the nation which is there described.[y]

But then as to the thing itself, whether God hath commanded infants to be baptized, it is indeed a worthy inquiry, and the sum of all this contestation: but then it is also to be concluded by every argument that proves the thing to be holy, or charitable, or necessary, or the means of salvation, or to be instituted and made, in order to an indispensable end. For all commandments are not expressed in imperial forms, as, 'we will,' or 'will not;' 'thou shalt,' or 'shalt not:' but some are by declaration of necessity, some by a direct institution, some by involution and apparent consequence, some by proportion and analogy, by identities and parities, and Christ never expressly commanded that we should receive the holy communion, but that, when the supper was celebrated, it should be 'in his memorial.' And if we should use the same method of arguing in all other instances, as the anabaptist does in this, and omit every thing for which there is not an express commandment, with an open nomination, and describing of the capacities of the persons concerned in the duty, we should have neither sacrament, nor ordinance, fasting, nor vows, communicating of women, nor baptizing of the clergy. And when St. Ambrose was chosen bishop before he was baptized, it could never, upon their account, have been told that he was obliged to baptism: because though Christ commanded the apostles

[y] Exod. xiii.

to baptize others, yet he no way told them that their successors should be baptized, any more than the apostles themselves were; of whom we read nothing in Scripture, that either they were actually baptized, or had a commandment so to be. To which may be added, that as the taking of priestly orders disobliges the suscipient from receiving chrism or confirmation, in case he had it not before; so, for aught appears in Scripture to the contrary, it may excuse from baptism. But if it does not, then the same way of arguing which obliges women or the clergy to be baptized, will be sufficient warrant to us to require, in the case of infants, no more signal precept than in the other, and to be content with the measures of wise men, who give themselves to understand the meaning of doctrines and laws, and not to exact the tittles and unavoidable commands by which fools and unwilling persons are to be governed, lest they die certainly if they be not called upon with univocal, express, open, and direct commandments. But besides all this, and the effect of all the other arguments, there is as much command for infants to be baptized as for men; there being in the words of Christ no nomination or specification of persons, but only in such words as can as well involve children as old men; as 'nisi quis,' and, 'omnes gentes,' and the like.

Ad 16.—But they have a device to save all harmless yet: for though it should be granted that infants are pressed with all the evils of original sin, yet there will be no necessity of baptism to infants, because it may very well be supposed, that as infants contracted the relative guilt of Adam's sin, that is, the evils descending by an evil inheritance from him to us, without any solemnity; so may infants be acquitted by Christ without solemnity, or the act of any other man. This is the sum of the sixteenth number. To which the answer is easy. First, that at the most it is but a dream of proportions, and can infer only that if it were so, there were some correspondence between the effects descending upon us from the two great representatives of the world; but it can never infer that it ought to be so. For these things are not wrought by the ways of nature, in which the proportions are regular and constant; but they are wholly arbitrary and mysterious, depending upon extrinsic causes which

are conducted by other measures, which we only know by events, and can never understand the reasons. For because the sin of Adam had effect upon us without a sacrament, must it, therefore, be wholly unnecessary that the death of Christ be applied to us by sacramental ministrations? If so, the argument will as well conclude against the baptism of men as of infants: for since they die in Adam, and had no solemnity to convey that death, therefore we by Christ shall all be made alive; and to convey this life, there needs no sacrament. This way of arguing, therefore, is a very trifle, but yet this is not: as infants were not infected with the stain, and injured by the evils of Adam's sin, but by the means of natural generation; so neither shall they partake of the benefits of Christ's death but by spiritual regeneration; that is, by being baptized into his death. For it is easier to destroy than to make alive; a single crime of one man was enough to ruin him and his posterity: but to restore us, it became necessary that the Son of God should be incarnate, and die, and be buried, and rise again, and intercede for us, and become our lawgiver, and we be his subjects, and keep his commandments. There was no such order of things in our condemnation to death: must it therefore follow, that there is no such in the justification of us unto life? To the first there needs no sacrament, for evil comes fast enough; but to the latter, there must go so much as God please; and the way which he hath appointed us externally is baptism: to which if he hath tied us, it is no matter to us whether he hath tied himself to it or no: for although he can go which way he please, yet he himself loves to go in the ways of his ordinary appointing, as it appears in the extreme paucity of miracles which are in the world, and he will not endure that we should leave them. So that, although there are many thousand ways by which God can bring any reasonable soul to himself; yet he will bring no soul to himself by ways extraordinary, when he hath appointed ordinary; and therefore, although it be unreasonable, of our own heads, to carry infants to God by baptism, without any direction from him; yet it is not unreasonable to understand infants to be comprehended in the duty, and to be intended in the general precept, when the words do not exclude them, nor any thing in the nature of the sacrament; and when they have a great

necessity, for the relief of which this way is commanded, and no other way signified, all the world will say there is reason we should bring them also the same way to Christ. And therefore, though we noways doubt but if we do not our duty to them, God will yet perform his merciful intention, yet that is nothing to us; though God can save by miracle, yet we must not neglect our charitable ministries. Let him do what he please to or for infants, we must not neglect them.

Ad 6.—The argument which is here described, is a very reasonable inducement to the belief of the certain effect to be consequent to the baptism of infants: because infants can do nothing towards heaven, and yet they are designed thither, therefore God will supply it. But he supplies it not by any internal assistances, and yet will supply it; therefore by an external. But there is no other external but baptism, which is of his own institution, and designed to effect those blessings which infants need: therefore we have reason to believe, that by this way God would have them brought.

Ad 17.—To this it is answered, after the old rate, that God will do it by his own immediate act. Well, I grant it; that is, he will give them salvation of his own goodness, without any condition on the infants' part personally performed; without faith and obedience, if the infant dies before the use of reason: but then, whereas it is added, that 'to say God will do it by an external act and ministry, and that by this rite of baptism, and no other, is no good argument, unless God could not do it without such means, or said he would not;'—the reply is easy, that we say God will effect this grace upon infants by this external ministry, not because God cannot use another, nor yet because he hath said he will not, but because he hath given us this, and hath given us no other. For he that hath a mind to make an experiment, may, upon the same argument, proceed thus. God hath given bread to strengthen man's heart, and hath said, that in the sweat of our brows we shall eat bread; and it is commanded, that if they do not work, they shall not eat: there being certain laws and conditions of eating, I will give to my labourers and hirelings, but therefore my child shall have none; for be you sure if I give to my child no man's meat, yet God will take as great care of infants as of others,

and God will, by his own immediate mercy, keep them alive as long as he hath intended them to live; but to say that, therefore, he will do it by external food, is no good argument, unless God could not do it without such means, or that he had said he would not. To this, I suppose, any reasonable person would say I have given sufficient answer, if I tell him that the argument is good, that the infants must eat man's food, although God can keep them alive without it, and although he hath not said that he will not keep them alive without it; I say, the argument is good, because he hath given them this way: and though he could give them another, and did never say he would not give them another; yet because he never did give them another, it is but reasonable that they should have this. To the last clause of this number, viz. why cannot God as well do his mercies to infants now immediately as he did before the institution either of circumcision or baptism? I answer, that I know no man that says he cannot: but yet this was not sufficient to hinder babes from circumcision, and why then shall it hinder them from baptism? For though God could save infants always without circumcision as well as he did sometime, yet he required this of them; and therefore it may be so in baptism, this pretence notwithstanding.

Ad 7.—This number speaks to the main inquiry, and shews the commandment: "Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This precept was in all ages expounded to signify the ordinary necessity of baptism to all persons; and '*nisi quis*' can mean infants as well as men of age: and because it commands a new birth and a regeneration, and implies that a natural birth cannot entitle us to heaven, but the second birth must; infants who have as much need and as much right to heaven as men of years, and cannot yet have it by natural or first-birth, must have it by the second and spiritual: and therefore all are upon the same main account; and when they are accidentally differenced by age, they are also differenced by correspondent, accidental, and proportionable duties; but all must be born again. This birth is expressed here by water and the Spirit, that is, by the Spirit in baptismal water; for that is in Scripture called 'the laver of' a new birth or 'regeneration.'

Ad 18.—But here the anabaptist gives us his warrant: Though Christ said, 'none but those who are born again by water and the Spirit' shall enter into heaven; he answers, fear it not, I will warrant you. To this purpose it was once said before, "Yea, but hath God said, In the day ye shall eat thereof ye shall die?" I say ye shall not die, but "ye shall be like gods."—But let us hear the answer. First it is said—that baptism and the Spirit signify the same thing: for by water is meant the effect of the Spirit.—I reply, that therefore they do not signify the same thing, because by water is meant the effect of the Spirit; unless the effect and the cause be the same thing: so that here is a contradiction in the parts of the allegation. But if they signify two things, as certainly they do, then they may as well signify the sign and the thing signified, as the cause and the effect; or they may mean the sacrament and the grace of the sacrament, as it is most agreeable to the whole analogy of the Gospel. For we are sure that Christ ordained baptism, and it is also certain that in baptism he did give the Spirit; and therefore to confound these two is to no purpose, when severally they have their certain meaning, and the laws of Christ and the sense of the whole Church, the institution and the practice of baptism make them two terms of a relation, a sign and a thing signified, the sacrament and the grace of the sacrament. For I offer it to the consideration of any man that believes Christ to have ordained the sacrament of baptism, which is most agreeable to the institution of Christ, that by 'water and the Spirit' should be meant the outward element and inward grace; or that 'by water and Spirit' should be meant only the Spirit cleansing us like water? But suppose it did mean so, what would be effected or persuaded by it more than by the other? If it be said, that then infants by this place were not obliged to baptism; I reply, that yet they were obliged to new birth nevertheless; they must be born again of the Spirit, if not of water and the Spirit: and if they are bound to be regenerate by the Spirit, why they shall not be baptized with water, which is the symbol and sacrament, the 'vehiculum' and channel of its ordinary conveyance, I profess I cannot understand how to make a reasonable conjecture. But it may be they mean, that if by water and the Spirit be only meant 'Spiritus purificans,' the cleansing, 'purifying Spirit,' then this place cannot

concern infants at all: but this loop-hole I have already obstructed by placing a bar that can never be removed. For it is certain and evident, that regeneration or new birth is here enjoined to all as of absolute and indispensable necessity; and if infants be not obliged to it, then by their natural birth they go to heaven, or not at all: but if infants must be born again, then either let these adversaries shew any other way of new birth but this of water and the Spirit; or let them acknowledge this to belong to infants, and then the former discourse returns upon them in its full strength. So that now I shall not need to consider their parallel instance of "being baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire." For although there are differences enough to be observed, the one being only a prophecy, and the other a precept; the one concerning some only, and the other concerning all; the one being verified with degrees and variety, the other equally and to all: yet this place, which, in the main expression, I confess to have similitude, was verified in the letter and first signification of it, and so did relate to the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost in the likeness of tongues of fire; but this concerns not all, for all were not so baptized. And whereas it is said in the objection, that the Baptist told not Christ's disciples but the Jews, and that therefore it was intended to relate to all: it was well observed, but to no purpose; for Christ at that time had no disciples. But he told it to the Jews: and yet it does not follow that they should all be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire; but it is meant only that that glorious effect should be to them a sign of Christ's eminence above him; they should see from him a baptism greater than that of John. And that it must be meant of that miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost, and not of any secret gift or private immission, appears, because the Baptist offered it as a sign and testimony of the prelation and greatness of Christ above him; which could not be proved to them by any secret operation which cometh not by observation, but by a great and miraculous mission, such as was that in Pentecost. So that hence to argue, that we may as well conclude that infants must also pass through the fire as through the water, is a false conclusion inferred from no premises; because this being only a prophecy, and inferring no duty, could neither concern men or children to any of the purposes of their

argument. For Christ never said, "Unless ye be baptized with fire and the Spirit, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" but of 'water and the Spirit' he did say it: therefore though they must pass through the water, yet no smell of fire must pass upon them.

But there are yet two things, by which they offer to escape. The one is, that, in these words, baptism by water is not meant at all, but baptism by the Spirit only; because St. Peter having said that "baptism saves us," he adds, by way of explication, "not the washing of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," plainly saying, that it is "not water, but the Spirit." To this I reply, that when water is taken exclusively to the Spirit,—it is very true that it is not water that cleanses the soul, and the cleansing of the body cannot save us; but whoever urges the necessity of baptism, urges it but as a necessary sacrament, or instrument to convey or consign the Spirit: and this they might with a little observation have learned; there being nothing more usual in discourse, than to deny the effect to the instrument when it is compared with the principal, and yet not intend to deny to it an instrumental efficiency. It is not the pen that writes well, but the hand; and St. Paul said, "It is not I, but the grace of God:" and yet it was "gratia Dei mecum," that is, the principal and the less principal together. So St. Peter: It is not water but the Spirit; or, which may come to one and the same, "not the washing the filth of the flesh, but purifying the conscience, that saves us;" and yet neither one nor the other is absolutely excluded, but the effect which is denied to the instrument, is attributed to the principal cause. But however, this does no more concern infants than men of age; for they are not 'saved by the washing of the body, but by the answer of a good conscience,' by the Spirit of holiness and sanctification: that is, water alone does not do it, unless the Spirit move upon the water. But that water also is in the ministry, and is not to be excluded from its portion of the work, appears by the words of the apostle; "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, saves us," &c., that is, baptism even as it is a figure, saves us, in some sense or other; by way of ministry and instrumental efficiency, by conjunction and consolidation with the other: but the ceremony, the figure, the rite,

and external ministry, must be in, or else his words will in no sense be true, and could be made true by no interpretation; because the Spirit may be the thing figured, but can never be a figure. The other little κρησφύγετον is, that these words were spoken before baptism was ordained, and therefore could not concern baptism, much less prove the necessity of baptizing infants. I answer, that so are the sayings of the prophets long before the coming of Christ, and yet concerned his coming most certainly. Secondly: they were not spoken before the institution of baptism; for the disciples of Christ did baptize more than the Baptist ever in his lifetime: they were indeed spoken before the commission was of baptizing all nations, or taking the Gentiles into the Church; but not before Christ made disciples, and his apostles baptized them, among the Jews. And it was so known a thing, that great prophets and the fathers of an institution did baptize disciples, that our blessed Saviour upbraided Nicodemus for his ignorance of that particular, and his not understanding words spoken in the proportion and imitation of a custom so known among them.

But then, that this argument which presses so much, may be attempted in all the parts of it, like soldiers fighting against cuirassiers that try all the joints of their armour, so do these to this. For they object (in the same number) that the exclusive negative of "nisi quis" does not include infants, but only persons capable: for (say they) this no more infers a necessity of infants' baptism, than the parallel words of Christ, "nisi comederitis,—unless ye eat" the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,[2] infer a necessity to give them the holy communion, &c. With this argument men use to make a great noise in many questions; but in this it will signify but little. First: Indeed to one of the Roman communion it will cause some disorder in this question, both because they think it unlawful to give the holy communion to infants, and yet that these words are meant of the holy communion: and if we thought so too, I do not doubt but we should communicate them with the same opinion of necessity as did the Primitive Church. But to the thing itself: I grant that the expression is equal, and infers an equal necessity in their respective cases; and therefore it

[2] John, vi. 53.

is as necessary to eat the flesh of the Son of man and to drink his blood, as to be baptized: but then it is to be added, that eating and drinking are metaphors and allusions, used only upon occasion of manna, which was then spoken of, and which occasioned the whole discourse; but the thing itself is nothing but that Christ should be received for the life of our souls, as bread and drink are for the life of our bodies. Now because there are many ways of receiving Christ, there are so many ways of obeying this precept; but that some way or other it be obeyed, is as necessary as that we be baptized. Here only it is declared to be necessary, that Christ be received, that we derive our life and our spiritual and eternal being from him; now this can concern infants, and does infer an ordinary necessity of their baptism: for in baptism they are united to Christ, and Christ to them: in baptism they receive the beginnings of a new life from Christ: it is a receiving Christ which is the duty here enjoined; this is one way of doing it, and all the ways that they are capable of. And that this precept can be performed this way, St. Austin affirms expressly, in his third book "de Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione."[a] In this thing there is nothing hard but the metaphors of eating and drinking. Now that this is to be spiritually understood, our blessed Lord himself affirms in answer to the prejudice of the offended Capernaites; that it is to be understood of faith, and that faith is the spiritual manducation, is the sense of the ancient Church: and therefore, in what sense soever any one is obliged to believe, in the same sense he is obliged to the duty of spiritual manducation, and no otherwise. But because infants cannot be obliged to the act or habit of faith, and yet can receive the sacrament of faith, they receive Christ as they can,—and as they can, are entitled to life.[b] But however, by this means the difficulty of the expression is taken off: for if by eating and drinking Christ are meant receiving Christ by faith, then this phrase can be no objection but that St. Austin's affirmative may be true, and that this commandment is performed by infants in baptism, which is the sacrament of faith. To eat and drink do, with as great impropriety, signify faith as baptism; but this is it which I said at first,

[a] Et in Serm. ad Infantes, apud V. Bedam in 1 Cor. x. John, vi. 63.

[b] See the Disc. of the Real Presence, sect. iii.

that the metaphorical expression was no part of the precept, but the 'vehiculum' of the commandment, occasioned by the preceding discourse of our blessed Saviour; and nothing is necessary but that Christ should be received by all that would have life eternal: of which because infants are capable, and without receiving Christ they (by virtue of these words) are not capable, and but in baptism they cannot receive Christ; it follows, that these words are no argument to infer an equal necessity of communicating infants, but they are a good argument to prove a necessity of baptizing them. Secondly: but, further yet, I demand, can infants receive Christ in the eucharist? Can they, in that sacrament, eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood? If they cannot, then neither these words nor any other can infer an equal necessity of being communicated, for they can infer none at all: and whether those other words of "nisi quis renatus fuerit," &c. do infer a necessity of baptism, will be sufficiently cleared upon their own account. But if infants can receive Christ in the eucharist, to which they can no more dispose themselves by repentance than they can to baptism by faith, then it were indeed very well if they were communicated, but yet not necessary,—because, if they can receive Christ in the eucharist, they can receive Christ in baptism; and if they can receive him any way, this precept is performed by that way: and then whether they must also be communicated, must be inquired by other arguments; for whatsoever is in these words intended, is performed by any way of receiving Christ, and therefore cannot infer more in all circumstances and to all persons. Thirdly: suppose these words were to be expounded of sacramental manducation of the flesh of Christ in the Lord's supper, yet it does not follow that infants are as much bound to receive the communion as to receive the baptism. It is too crude a fancy to think that all universal propositions, whether affirmative or negative, equally expressed, do signify an equal universality. It is said in the law of Moses, "Whosoever is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people:" this indeed signifies universally, and included infants, binding them to that sacrament. But when it was said, "Whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great;"[c] although these

[c] 2 Chron. xv. 13.

words be expressed with as great a latitude as the other, yet it is certain it did not include infants, who could not seek the Lord. The same is the case of the two sacraments: the obligation to which we do not understand only by the preceptive words or form of the commandments, but by other appendages, and the words of duty that are relative to the suscipients of the several sacraments, and the analogy of the whole institution. Baptism is the sacrament of beginners, the eucharist of proficients; that is the birth, this is the nourishment, of a Christian. There are many more things of difference to be observed. But as the Church in several ages hath practised severally in this article, so in the particular there is no such certainty but that the Church may without sin do it or not do it, as she sees cause: but that there is not the same necessity in both to all persons, and that no necessity of communicating infants can be inferred from the parallel words, appears in the former answers; and, therefore, I stand to them.

Ad 9.—The sum of the sixth argument is this. The promise of the Holy Ghost is made to all, to us and to our children: and if the Holy Ghost belong to them, then baptism belongs to them also; because baptism is the means of conveying the Holy Ghost, as appears in the words of St. Peter, "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost;"[d] as also because from this very argument St. Peter resolved to baptize Cornelius and his family, because they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost: for they that are capable of the same grace, are receptive of the same sign. Now that infants also can receive the effects of the Holy Spirit is evident, because,—besides that the promise of the Holy Ghost is made to all, to us and our posterity,—St. Paul affirms, that the 'children of believing parents are holy:' but all holiness is an emanation from the Holy Spirit of God.

Ad 19.—To the words of St. Peter they answer, that the promise does appertain to our children, that is, to our posterity; but not till they are capable: they have the same right which we have, but enter not into possession of their right till they have the same capacity: for by 'children' are not meant infants, but as the 'children of Israel' signifies the descendants only, so it is here. And indeed this is true enough, but not pertinent enough to answer the intention and effi-

[d] Acts, ii. 38, 39.

ciency of these words. For I do not suppose that the word 'children' means infants, but "you and your children" must mean all generations of Christendom, all the descendants of Christian parents: and if they belong to their posterity because they are theirs, then the promises belong to all that are so; and then children cannot be excluded. But I demand, Have not the children of believing parents a title to the promises of the Gospel? If they have none, then the kingdom of heaven belongs not to such; and if they die, we can do nothing but despair of their salvation; which is a proposition whose barbarity and unreasonable cruelty confutes itself. But if they have a title to the promises, then the thing is done, and this title of theirs can be signified by these words; and then either this is a good argument, or the thing is confessed without it. For he that hath a title to the promises of the Gospel, hath a title to this promise here mentioned, the promise of the Holy Spirit; for 'by him we are sealed to the day of redemption.'

And, indeed, that this mystery may be rightly understood, we are to observe, that the Spirit of God is the great ministry of the Gospel, and whatsoever blessing evangelical we can receive, it is the emanation of the Spirit of God. Grace and pardon, wisdom and hope, offices and titles, and relations, powers, privileges, and dignities, all are the good things of the Spirit; whatsoever we can profit withal, or whatsoever we can be profited by, is a gift of God the Father of spirits, and is transmitted to us by the Holy Spirit of God. For it is but a trifle and a dream to think that no person receives the Spirit of God but he that can do actions and operations spiritual. St. Paul[e] distinguishes the effects of the Spirit into three classes: there are χαρίσματα, and διακονίαι, and ἐνεργήματα· besides these 'operations,' there are 'gifts' and 'ministries:' and they that receive not the ἐνεργήματα, the 'operations,' or 'powers' to do actions spiritual, may yet receive 'gifts,' or at least the blessings of 'ministry;' they can be ministered to by others, who from the Spirit have received the power of ministration. And I instance in these things in which it is certain we can receive the Holy Spirit without any predisposition of our own. First, we can receive gifts: even the wicked have them, and they who shall be rejected at the day of judgment,

[e] 1 Cor. xii. 4–6.

shall yet argue for themselves, that they have wrought miracles in the name of the Lord Jesus; and yet the gift of miracles is a gift of the Holy Spirit:[f] and if the wicked can receive them, who are of dispositions contrary to all the emanations of the Holy Spirit, then much more may children, who, although they cannot prepare themselves any more than the wicked do, yet neither can they do against them to hinder or obstruct them. But of this we have an instance in a young child, Daniel, whose spirit God raised up to acquit the innocent, and to save her soul from unrighteous judges: and when the boys in the street sang Hosanna to the Son of David, our blessed Lord said, "that if they had held their peace, the stones of the street would have cried out Hosanna." And, therefore, that God should 'from the mouths of babes and sucklings ordain his own praise,' is one of the 'magnalia Dei,' but no strange thing to be believed by us, who are so apparently taught it in Holy Scripture.—Secondly: benediction or blessing is an emanation of God's Holy Spirit, and in the form of blessing which is recorded in the Epistles of St. Paul, one great part of it is "the communication of the Holy Spirit:" and it is very probable, that those three are but synonyma. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is to give us his Holy Spirit, and 'the love of God' is to give us his Holy Spirit;[g] for the Spirit is the love of the Father, and our blessed Saviour argues it as the testimony of God's love to us: "If ye, who are evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?" Now since the great sum and compendium of evangelical blessings is the Holy Spirit, and this which is expressed by three synonymas in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, is in the first reduced to one, it is all but 'the grace of the Lord Jesus;' it will follow that, since our blessed Saviour gave his solemn blessing to children, his blessing relating to the kingdom of heaven, "for of such is the kingdom,"—he will not deny his Spirit to them: when he blessed them, he gave them something of his Spirit, some emanation of that which blesses us all, and without which no man can be truly blessed.—Thirdly: titles to inheritance can be given to infants without any predisposing act of their own. Since therefore infants dying so can, as we all hope, receive the

[f] 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10 [g] 1 Cor. xvi. 23. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

inheritance of saints, some mansion in heaven, in that kingdom which belongs to them and such as they are, and that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the consignation to that inheritance; nothing can hinder them from receiving the Spirit, that is, nothing can hinder them to receive a title to the inheritance of the saints, which is the free gift of God, and the effect and blessing from the Spirit of God.

Now how this should prove to infants to be a title to baptism, is easy enough to be understood: "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body;"[h] that is, the Spirit of God moves upon the waters of baptism, and in that sacrament adopts us into the mystical body of Christ, and gives us title to a coinheritance with him.

Ad. 21.—So that this perfectly confutes what is said in the beginning of number 21, that baptism is not the means of conveying the Holy Ghost. For it is the Spirit that baptizes; it is the Spirit that adopts us to an inheritance of the promises; it is the Spirit that incorporates us into the mystical body of Christ; and upon their own grounds it ought to be confessed: for since they affirm the water to be nothing without the Spirit, it is certain that the water ought not to be without the Spirit; and, therefore, that this is the soul and life of the sacrament, and therefore usually in conjunction with that ministry, unless we hinder it: and it cannot be denied but that the Holy Ghost was given ordinarily to new converts at their baptism. And whereas it is said in a paren thesis, that this was, not as the effect is to the cause or to the proper instrument, but as a consequent is to an antecedent in a chain of causes accidentally, and by positive institution depending upon each other;—it is a groundless assertion: for when the men were called upon to be baptized, and were told they should receive the Holy Ghost; and we find that when they were baptized, they did receive the Holy Ghost; what can be more reasonable than to conclude baptism to be the ministry of the Spirit? And to say that this was not consequent properly and usually, but accidentally only, it followed sometimes, but was not so much as instrumentally effected by it, is as if one should boldly deny all effect to physic: for though men are called upon to take physic, and told they should recover, and when they do take physic they do recover; yet men may unreasonably say, this

[h] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

recovery does follow the taking of physic,—not as an effect to the cause or to the proper instrument, but as a consequent is to an antecedent in a chain of causes accidentally, and by positive institution depending upon each other.—Who can help it if men will say, that it happened that they recovered after the taking physic, but then was the time in which they should have been well however? The best confutation of them is to deny physic to them when they need, and try what nature will do for them without the help of art. The case is all one in this question, this only excepted, that in this case it is more unreasonable than in the matter of physic, because the Spirit is expressly signified to be the baptizer in the forecited place of St. Paul.[1]

From hence we argue, that since the Spirit is ministered in baptism, and that infants are capable of the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of incorporation into the body of Christ, the Spirit sealing them to the day of redemption, the Spirit entitling them to the promises of the Gospel, the Spirit consigning to them God's part of the covenant of grace; they are also capable of baptism: for whoever is capable of the grace of the sacrament, is capable of the sign or sacrament itself.

To this last clause the anabaptist answers two things. First, that the Spirit of God was conveyed sometimes without baptism. I grant it; but what then? Therefore baptism is not the sign or ministry of the Holy Ghost? It follows not. For the Spirit is the great wealth and treasure of Christians, and is conveyed in every ministry of Divine appointment; in baptism, in confirmation, in absolution, in orders, in prayer, in benediction, in assembling together. Secondly: the other thing they answer is this, that it is not true, that they who are capable of the same grace are capable of the same sign; for females were capable of the righteousness of faith, but not of the seal of circumcision. I reply, that the proposition is true not in natural capacities, but in spiritual and religious regards; that is, they who in religion are declared capable of the grace, are, by the same religion, capable of the sacrament or sign of that grace. But naturally they may be incapable by accident, as in the objection is mentioned. But then this is so far from invalidating the argument, that it confirms it

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

in the present instance. 'Exceptio firmat regulam in non exceptis.' For even the Jewish females, although they could not be circumcised, yet they were baptized even in those days, as I have proved already;[k] and although their natural indisposition denied them to be circumcised, yet neither nature nor religion forbade them to be baptized: and therefore, since the sacrament is such a ministry of which all are naturally capable, and none are forbidden by the religion, the argument is firm and unshaken, and concludes with as much evidence and certainty as the thing requires.

Ad 10.—The last argument from reason is, that it is reasonable to suppose, that God in the period of grace, in the days of the Gospel, would not give us a more contracted comfort, and deal with us by a narrower hand than with the Jewish babes, whom he sealed with a sacrament as well as enriched with a grace, and therefore openly consigned them to comfort and favour.

Ad 22.—To this they answer, that we are to trust the word, without a sign; and since we contend that the promise belongs to us and to our children, why do we not believe this, but require a sign? I reply that if this concludes any thing, it concludes against the baptism of men and women; for they hear and read and can believe the promise, and it can have all its effects and produce all its intentions upon men; but yet they also require the sign, they must be baptized. And the reason why they require it is, because Christ hath ordained it. And therefore, although we can trust the promise without a sign, and that if we did not, this manner of sign would not make us believe it, for it is not a miracle, that is, a sign proving, but it is a sacrament, that is, a sign signifying; and although we do trust the promise even in the behalf of infants when they cannot be baptized; yet by the same reason as we trust the promise, so we also use the rite, both in obedience to Christ; and we use the rite or the sacrament because we believe the promise; and if we did not believe that the promise did belong to our children, we would not baptize them. Therefore this is such an impertinent quarrel of the anabaptists, that it hath no strength at all but what it borrows from a cloud of words, and the advantages of its representment. As God did openly consign his grace to the Jewish

[k] See the "Great Exemplar," Part i. disc. of Baptism, numb. 8–10.

babes by a sacrament, so he does to ours: and we have reason to give God thanks, not only for the comfort of it (for that is the least part of it), but for the ministry and conveyance of the real blessing in this holy mystery.

Ad 23, 24, 25.—That which remains of objections and answers is wholly upon the matter of examples and precedents from the apostles and first descending ages of the Church: but to this I have already largely spoken in a discourse of this question;[1] and if the anabaptists would be concluded by the practice of the universal Church in this question, it would quickly be at an end. For although sometimes the baptism of children was deferred till the age of reason and choice; yet it was only when there was no danger of the death of the children: and although there might be some advantages gotten by such delation; yet it could not be endured that they should be sent out of the world without it. Κρεῖσσον γὰρ ἀναισθήτως ἁγιασθῆναι, ἢ ἀπελθεῖν ἀσφράγιστα καὶ ἀτέλεστα, said St. Gregory Nazianzen:—"It is better they should be sanctified even when they understand it not, than that they should go away from hence without the seal of perfection and sanctification."—Secondly: but that baptism was amongst the ancients sometimes deferred, was not always upon a good reason, but sometimes upon the same account as men nowadays defer repentance, or put off confession, and absolution, and the communion, till the last day of their life; that their baptism might take away all the sins of their life.—Thirdly: it is no strange thing that there are examples of late baptism, because heathenism and Christianity were so mingled in towns, and cities, and private houses, that it was but reasonable sometimes to stay till men did choose their religion, from which it was so likely they might afterward be tempted.—Fourthly: the baptism of infants was always most notorious and used in the churches of Africa, as is confessed by all that know the ecclesiastical story.—Fifthly: among the Jews it was one and all: if the 'major-domo' believed, he believed for himself and all his family, and they all followed him to baptism, even before they were instructed; and therefore it is that we find mention of the baptism of whole families, in which children are

[1] Disc. of Baptism of Infants, versùs finem, in the "Great Exemplar," Part i. p. 202, &c.

as well to be reckoned as the uninstructed servants: and if actual faith be not required before baptism, even of those who are naturally capable of it, as it is notorious in the case of the jailor who believed, and at that very hour he and all his family were baptized, then want of faith cannot prejudice infants, and then nothing can.—Sixthly: there was never in the Church a command against the baptizing infants: and whereas it is urged that, in the Council of Neocæsarea the baptism of a pregnant woman did no way relate to the child, and that the reason there given excludes all infants upon the same account, because every one is to shew his faith by his own choice and election; I answer, that this might very well be in those times, where Christianity had not prevailed, but was forced to dispute for every single proselyte, and the mother was a Christian and the father a heathen; there was reason that the child should be let alone till he could choose for himself, when peradventure it was not fit his father should choose for him: and that is the meaning of the words of Balsamo and Zonaras upon that canon. But, secondly, the words of the Neocæsarean canon are rightly considered. For the reason is not relative to the child, but only to the woman, concerning whom the council thus decreed. The woman with child may be baptized when she will: Οὐδὲν γὰρ κοινωνεῖ ἡ τίκτουσα τῷ τικτομένῳ διὰ τὸ ἑκάστου ἰδίαν τὴν προαίρεσιν τὴν ἐν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ δείκνυσθαι. For her baptism reaches not to the child, because every one confesses his faith by his own act and choice: that is, the woman confesses only for herself, she intends it only for herself, she chooses only for herself; and therefore is only baptized for herself. But this intimates, that if she could confess for her child, the baptism would relate to her child; but therefore, when the parents do confess for the child, or the godfathers, and that the child is baptized into that confession, it is valid. However, nothing in this canon is against it.

I have now considered all that the anabaptists can with probability object against our arguments, and have discovered the weakness of their exceptions, by which although they are and others may be abused, yet it is their weakness that is the cause of it: for which although the men are to be pitied, yet it may appear now that their cause is not at all the better.

Ad 28.—It remains that I consider their own arguments by which they support themselves in their mispersuasion. First, it is against the analogy of the Gospel: for besides that Christ never baptized any infants, nor his apostles, there is required to baptism, faith and repentance; of which because infants are not capable, neither are they capable of the sacrament. To these things I answer, that it is true Christ never baptized infants, for he baptized no person at all: but he blessed infants, and what that amounts to I have already discoursed: and he gave a commandment of baptism which did include them also, as I have proved in the foregoing periods, and in other places. That the apostles never baptized infants, is boldly said, but can never be proved. But then as to the main of the argument, that faith and repentance are pre-required; I answer, it is in this as it was in circumcision, to which a proselyte could not be admitted from Gentilism or idolatry, unless he gave up his name to the religion, and believed in God and his servant Moses; but yet their children might: and it might have been as well argued against their children as ours, since in their proselytes and ours there were required predispositions of faith and repentance. 2. But it is no wonder that these are called for by the apostles of those whom they invited to the religion: they dealt with men of reason, but such who had superinduced foul sins to their infidelity; which were to be removed before they could be illuminated and baptized; but infants are in their pure naturals, and, therefore, nothing hinders them from receiving the gifts and mere graces of God's holy Spirit before mentioned. 3. But we see also that, although Christ required faith of them who came to be healed, yet when any were brought, or came in behalf of others, he only required faith of them who came, and their faith did benefit to others. For no man can call on him on whom they have not believed, but therefore they who call must believe; and if they call for others, they must believe that Christ can do it for others.[m] But this instance is so certain a reproof of this objection of theirs, which is their principal, which is their all, that it is a wonder to me they should not all be convinced at the reading and observing of it. I knew an eminent person amongst them, who having been abused by their fallacies, upon the

[m] Matt. ix. 28. Mark, ix. 23. Matt. viii. 13. John, iv. 50.

discovery of the falsehood of this their main allegation, was converted: and I know also some others who could not at all object against it; but if they had been as humble as they were apprehensive, would certainly have confessed their error. But to this I can add nothing new beyond what I have largely discoursed of in the treatise of baptism before mentioned.

Ad 30.—The next argument is,—If baptism be necessary to infants, upon whom is the imposition laid? to whom is the command given? The children are not capable of a law, therefore it is not given to them: nor yet to the parents, because if so, then the salvation of infants should be put into the power of others, who may be careless or malicious.—I answer, that there is no precept of baptizing infants just in that circumstance of age; for then they had sinned who had deferred it upon just grounds to their manhood. But it is a precept given to all, and it is made necessary by that order of things which Christ hath constituted in the New Testament; so that if they be baptized at all in their just period, there is no commandment broken: but if infants come not to be men, then it was accidentally necessary they should have been baptized before they were men. And now to the inquiry, upon whom the imposition lies, it is easy to give an answer: it lies upon them who receive it, and, therefore, upon the parents: not so that the salvation of infants depends upon others, God forbid; but so, that if they neglect the charitable ministry, they shall dearly account for it. It is easy to be understood by two instances. God commanded that children should be circumcised: Moses, by his wife's peevishness, neglected it; and, therefore, the Lord sought to kill him for it, not Gershom the child. It is necessary for the preservation of children's lives that they eat, but the provision of meat for them is a duty incumbent on the parents; and yet if parents expose their children, it may be the lives of the children shall not depend on others; but "when their father and mother forsake them, the Lord taketh them up:" and so it is in this particular; what is wanting to them by the neglect of others, God will supply by his own graces and immediate dispensation. But if baptism be made necessary to all, then it ought to be procured for those who cannot procure it for themselves; just as meat and drink, and physic, and education. And it is in this as it is in blessing; little babes cannot ask it, but

their needs require it; and, therefore, as by their friends they were brought to Christ to have it, so they must, without their asking, minister it to them, who yet are bound to seek it as soon as they can. The precept binds them both in their several periods.

Ad 31.—But their next great strength consists in this dilemma. If baptism does no good, there needs no contention about it: if it does, then either by the 'opus operatum' of the sacrament, or by the dispositions of the suscipient. If the former, that is worse than popery: if the latter, then infants cannot receive it, because they cannot dispose themselves to its reception. I answer, that it works its effect neither by the ceremony alone, nor yet by that and the dispositions together, but by the grace of God working as he please, seconding his own ordinance; and yet infants are rightly disposed for the receiving the blessings and effects of baptism. For the understanding of which we are to observe, that God's graces are so free, that they are given to us upon the accounts of his own goodness only, and for the reception of them we are tied to no other predisposition, but that we do not hinder them. For what worthiness can there be in any man to receive the first grace? Before grace there can be nothing good in us, and, therefore, before the first grace, there is nothing that can deserve it; because before the first grace there is no grace, and consequently no worthiness. But the dispositions which are required in men of reason, is nothing but to remove the hinderances of God's grace, to take off the contrarieties to the good Spirit of God. Now because in infants there is nothing that can resist God's Spirit, nothing that can hinder him, nothing that can grieve him, they have that simplicity and nakedness, that passivity and negative disposition, or non-hinderances, to which all that men can do in disposing themselves, are but approaches and similitudes; and, therefore, infants can receive all that they need, all that can do them benefit. And although there are some effects of the Holy Spirit which require natural capacities to be their foundation; yet those are the ἐνεργήματα or powers of working: but the χαρίσματα, and the inheritance and the title to the promises require nothing on our part, but that we can receive them, that we put no hinderance to them: for that is the direct meaning of our blessed Saviour, "He that doth not receive the kingdom of God as a little child,

shall in nowise enter therein;" that is, without that nakedness and freedom from obstruction and impediment, none shall enter.

Upon the account of this truth, all that long harangue that pursues this dilemma in other words to the same purposes, will quickly come to nothing. For baptism is not a mere ceremony, but, assisted by the grace of the Lord Jesus, the communication of the Holy Spirit; and yet it requires a duty on our part when we are capable of duty, and need it; but is enabled to produce its effects without any positive disposition, even by a negative of children, by their not putting a bar to the Holy Spirit of God, that God may be glorified, and may be all in all.

Two particulars more are considerable in their argument.

The first is a syllogism made up out of the words of St. Paul, "All that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."[n] The minor proposition is, with a little straining some other words of St. Paul, thus, 'but they that put on Christ,' or 'the new man, must be formed in righteousness and holiness of truth;' for so the apostle, "Put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."[o] But infants cannot put on Christ to any such purposes, and, therefore, cannot be baptized into Christ. I answer, that to put on Christ is to become like unto him, and we put him on in all ways by which we resemble him. The little babes of Bethlehem were like unto Christ, when it was given to them to die for him who died for them and us: we are like unto him when we have put on his robe of righteousness, when we are invested with the wedding-garment, when we submit to his will and to his doctrine, when we are adopted to his inheritance, when we are innocent, and when we are washed, and when we are buried with him in baptism. The expression is a metaphor, and cannot be confined to one particular signification: but if it could, yet the apostle does not say, that all who in any sense put on the new man, are actually holy and righteous; neither does he say, that by the 'new man' is meant Christ, for that also is another metaphor, and it means a new manner of living. When Christ is opposed to Adam, Christ is called the 'new man;' but when the new man is opposed to the old conversation, then by the 'new man' Christ is not meant: and so it is in this

[n] Gal. iii. 27. [o] Eph. iv. 24.

place, it signifies to become a new man, and it is an exhortation to those who had lived wickedly, now to live holily and according to the intentions of Christianity. But to take two metaphors from two several books, and to concentre them into one signification, and to make them up into one syllogism, is 'fallacia quatuor terminorum;' they prove nothing but the craft of the men, or the weakness of the cause. For the words to the Ephesians were spoken to them who already had been baptized, who had before that in some sense put on Christ, but yet he calls upon them to put on the new man; therefore, this is something else; and it means that they should verify what they had undertaken in baptism: which also can concern children, but is seasonable to urge it to them, as St. Paul does to the Ephesians, after their baptism.

But yet after all, let the argument press as far as it is intended, yet infants, even in the sense of the apostle, "do put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness:" for so are they; they are 'a new creation,' they are 'born again,' they are efformed after the image of Christ, by the designation and adoption of the Holy Spirit: but as they cannot do acts of reason, and yet are created in a reasonable nature; so they are anew created in righteousness, even before they can do acts spiritual; that is, they are 'designati sanctitatis,' as Tertullian's expression is; they are in the second birth as in the first instructed with the beginnings and principles of life, not with inherent qualities, but with titles and relations to promises, and estates of blessing, and assistances of holiness; which principles of life, if they be nourished, will express themselves in perfect and symbolical actions. The thing is easy to be understood by them who observe the manner of speaking usual in Scripture. 'We are begotten to a lively hope,' so St. Paul: the very consignation and designing us to that hope, which is laid up for the saints, is a new birth, a regeneration, the beginnings of a new life: and of this infants are as capable as any.

The other thing is this, that the infants' vow is invalid till it be after confirmed in the days of reason; and, therefore, it were as good to be let alone, till it can be made with effect. I answer, that if there were nothing in the sacrament but the making of a vow, I confess I could see no necessity in it, nor any convenience, but that it engages

children to an early piety, and their parents and guardians by their care to prevent the follies of their youth: but then when we consider that infants receive great blessings from God in this holy ministry, that what is done to them on God's part, is of great effect before the ratification of their vow, this prudential consideration of theirs is light and airy.

And after all this it will be easy to determine which is the surer way. For certainly to baptize infants is hugely agreeable to that charity which Christ loved in those who brought them to him; and if infants die before the use of reason, it can do them no hurt that they were given to God in a holy designation; it cannot any way be supposed, and is not pretended by any one to prejudice their eternity: but if they die without baptism, it is then highly questioned whether they have not an intolerable loss. And if it be questioned by wise men whether the want of it do not occasion their eternal loss, and it is not questioned whether baptism does them any hurt or no, then certainly to baptize them is the surer way without all peradventure.

Ad 33.—The last number sums up many words of affrightment together, but no argument, nothing but bold and unjustifiable assertions; against which I only oppose their direct contradictories. But instead of them the effect of the former discourse is this, that whoever shall pertinaciously deny or carelessly neglect the baptism of infants, does uncharitably expose his babes to the danger of an eternal loss, from which there is no way to recover but an extraordinary way, which God hath not revealed to us; he shuts them out of the Church, and keeps them out who are more fit to enter than himself; he, as much as lies in him, robs the children of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and a title to the promises evangelical; he supposes that they cannot receive God's gifts unless they do in some sense or other deserve them, and that a negative disposition is not sufficient preparation to a new creation, and an obediential capacity is nothing, and yet it was all that we could have in our first creation; he supposes that we must do something before the first grace, that is, that God does not love us first, but we first love him; that we seek him, and he does not seek us; that we are beforehand with him, and, therefore, can do something without him; that nature can alone bring us to God. For if he did not suppose

all this, his great pretence of the necessity of faith and repentance would come to nothing: for infants might without such dispositions receive the grace of baptism, which is always the first; unless by the superinducing of actual sins upon our nature, we make it necessary to do something to remove the hinderances of God's Spirit, and that some grace be accidentally necessary before that which ordinarily and regularly is the first grace. He, I say, that denies baptism to infants, does disobey Christ's commandment, which being in general and indefinite terms, must include all that can be saved, or can come to Christ; and he excepts from Christ's commandment whom he pleases, without any exception made by Christ; he makes himself lord of the sacrament, and takes what portions he pleases from his fellow-servants, like an evil and an unjust steward; he denies to bring little children to Christ, although our dearest Lord commanded them to be brought; he upbraids the practice and charity of the holy catholic Church, and keeps infants from the communion of saints, from a participation of the promises, from their part of the covenant, from the laver of regeneration, from being rescued from the portion of Adam's inheritance, from a new creation, from the kingdom of God, which belongs to them and such as are like them. And he that is guilty of so many evils, and sees such horrid effects springing from his doctrine, must quit his error, or else openly profess love to a serpent, and direct enmity to the most innocent part of mankind.

I do not think the anabaptists perceive or think these things to follow from their doctrine: but yet they do so really. And, therefore, the effect of this is, that their doctrine is wholly to be reproved and disavowed, but the men are to be treated with the usages of a Christian: strike them not as an enemy, but exhort them as brethren. They are with all means Christian and human to be redargued or instructed: but if they cannot be persuaded, they must be left to God, who knows every degree of every man's understanding, all his weaknesses and strengths, what impress every argument makes upon his spirit, and how uncharitable every reason is, and he alone judges of his ignorance or his malice, his innocence or his avoidable deception. We have great reason to be confident as to our own part of the question;

but it were also well if our knowledge would make us thankful to God, and humble in ourselves, and charitable to our brother. It is pride that makes contention, but humility is the way of peace and truth.

SECTION XIX.

That there may be no Toleration of Doctrines inconsistent with Piety or the public Good.

1. But then for their other capital opinion, with all its branches, that it is not lawful for princes to put malefactors to death, nor to take up defensive arms, nor to minister an oath, nor to contend in judgment, it is not to be disputed with such liberty as the former. For although it be part of that doctrine which Clemens Alexandrinus[p] says was delivered "per secretam traditionem apostolorum, non licere Christianis contendere in judicio, nec coram gentibus nec coram sanctis; et perfectum non debere jurare;" and the other part seems to be warranted by the eleventh canon of the Nicene Council, which enjoins penance to them that take arms after their conversion to Christianity; yet either these authorities are to be slighted, or be made receptive of any interpretation, rather than the commonwealth be disarmed of its necessary supports, and all laws made ineffectual and impertinent. For the interest of the republic and the well-being of bodies politic, is not to depend upon the nicety of our imaginations, or the fancies of any peevish or mistaken priests; and there is no reason a prince should ask John-a-Brunck whether his understanding would give him leave to reign, and be a king. Nay, suppose there were divers places of Scripture which did seemingly restrain the political use of the sword; yet since the avoiding a personal inconvenience hath by all men been accounted sufficient reason to expound Scripture to any sense rather than the literal, which infers an unreasonable inconvenience (and, therefore, the 'pulling out an eye,' and the 'cutting off a hand,' is expounded by mortifying a vice, and killing a criminal habit), much rather must the allegations against the

[p] Lib. vii. Strom.

power of the sword endure any sense rather than it should be thought that Christianity should destroy that which is the only instrument of justice, the restraint of vice and support of bodies politic. It is certain that Christ, and his apostles, and Christian religion, did comply with the most absolute government, and the most imperial that was then in the world, and it could not have been at all endured in the world if it had not; for indeed the world itself could not last in regular and orderly communities of men, but be a perpetual confusion, if princes and the supreme power in bodies politic were not armed with a coercive power to punish malefactors: the public necessity and universal experience of all the world convince those men of being most unreasonable that make such pretences which destroy all laws, and all communities, and the bands of civil societies, and leave it arbitrary to every vain or vicious person, whether men shall be safe, or laws be established, or a murderer hanged, or princes rule. So that in this case men are not so much to dispute with particular arguments, as to consider the interest and concernment of kingdoms and public societies. For the religion of Jesus Christ is the best establisher of the felicity of private persons, and of public communities: it is a religion that is prudent and innocent, humane and reasonable, and brought infinite advantages to mankind, but no inconvenience, nothing that is unnatural, or unsociable, or unjust. And if it be certain that this world cannot be governed without laws, and laws without a compulsory signify nothing; then it is certain that it is no good religion that teaches doctrine whose consequents will destroy all government: and therefore it is as much to be rooted out as any thing that is the greatest pest and nuisance to the public interest. And that we may guess at the purposes of the men, and the inconvenience of such doctrine, these men that did first intend by their doctrine to disarm all princes and bodies politic, did themselves take up arms to establish their wild and impious fancy. And indeed that prince or commonwealth that should be persuaded by them, would be exposed to all the insolences of foreigners, and all mutinies of the teachers themselves, and the governors of the people could not do that duty they owe to their people, of protecting them from the rapine and malice, which will be in the world as long as

the world is. And therefore here they are to be restrained from preaching such doctrine, if they mean to preserve their government: and the necessity of the thing will justify the lawfulness of the thing. If they think it to themselves, that cannot be helped; so long it is innocent as much as concerns the public: but if they preach it, they may be accounted authors of all the consequent inconveniences, and punished accordingly. No doctrine that destroys government is to be endured. For although those doctrines are not always good that serve the private ends of princes, or the secret designs of state, which by reason of some accidents or imperfections of men may be promoted by that which is false and pretending; yet no doctrine can be good that does not comply with the formality of government itself, and the well-being of bodies politic. "Augur cùm esset Cato, dicere ausus est, optimis auspiciis ea geri, quæ pro reipublicæ salute gererentur; quæ contra rempublicam ferrentur contra auspicia ferri."[q] Religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to do it disadvantage: and therefore those doctrines that inconvenience the public, are no parts of good religion. 'Ut respublica salva sit,' is a necessary consideration in the permission of prophesyings; for according to the true, solid, and prudent ends of the republic, so is the doctrine to be permitted or restrained, and the men that preach it according as they are good subjects and right commonwealth's men. For religion is a thing superinduced to temporal government, and the Church is an addition of a capacity to a commonwealth, and therefore is in no sense to disserve the necessity and just interests of that, to which it is superadded for its advantage and conservation.

2. And thus by a proportion to the rules of these instances all their other doctrines are to have their judgment as concerning toleration or restraint: for all are either speculative or practical, they are consistent with the public ends or inconsistent, they teach impiety or they are innocent; and they are to be permitted or rejected accordingly. For in the question of toleration, the foundation of faith, good life and government are to be secured: in all other cases the former considerations are effectual.

[q] Cicero de Senectute, iv. 4. Wetzel. p. 28.

SECTION XX.

How far the Religion of the Church of Rome is tolerable.

1. But now concerning the religion of the Church of Rome (which was the other instance I promised to consider) we will proceed another way, and not consider the truth or falsity of the doctrines; for that is not the best way to determine this question concerning permitting their religion or assemblies. Because that a thing is not true, is not argument sufficient to conclude, that he that believes it true, is not to be endured: but we are to consider, what inducements they are that possess the understanding of those men, whether they be reasonable and innocent, sufficient to abuse or persuade wise and good men; or whether the doctrines be commenced upon design, and managed with impiety, and then have effects not to be endured.

2. And here, first, I consider, that those doctrines that have had long continuance and possession in the Church, cannot easily be supposed in the present professors to be a design, since they have received it from so many ages; and it is not likely that all ages should have the same purposes, or that the same doctrine should serve the several ends of divers ages. But however, long prescription is a prejudice oftentimes so insupportable, that it cannot with many arguments be retrenched, as relying upon these grounds, that truth is more ancient than falsehood; that God would not for so many ages forsake his Church, and leave her in an error; that whatsoever is new, is not only suspicious, but false: which are suppositions pious and plausible enough. And if the Church of Rome had communicated infants so long as she hath prayed to saints or baptized infants, the communicating would have been believed with as much confidence as the other articles are, and the dissentients with as much impatience rejected. But this consideration is to be enlarged upon all those particulars, which, as they are apt to abuse the persons of the men and amuse their understandings, so they are instruments of their excuse, and by making their errors to be invincible, and their opinions, though false, yet not criminal, make it also to be an effect of reason

and charity to permit the men a liberty of their conscience, and let them answer to God for themselves and their own opinions. Such as are the beauty and splendour of their church; their pompous service; the stateliness and solemnity of the hierarchy; their name of catholic, which they suppose their own due, and to concern no other sect of Christians; the antiquity of many of their doctrines; the continual succession of their bishops; their immediate derivation from the apostles; their title to succeed St. Peter; the supposal and pretence of his personal prerogatives; the advantages which the conjunction of the imperial seat with their episcopal hath brought to that see; the flattering expressions of minor bishops, which, by being old records, have obtained credibility; the multitude and variety of people which are of their persuasion; apparent consent with antiquity in many ceremonials, which other churches have rejected; and a pretended, and sometimes an apparent consent with some elder ages in many matters doctrinal; the advantage which is derived to them by entertaining some personal opinions of the fathers, which they, with infinite clamours, see to be cried up to be a doctrine of the Church of that time; the great consent of one part with another, in that which most of them affirm to be 'de fide;' the great differences which are commenced amongst their adversaries, abusing the liberty of prophesying unto a very great licentiousness; their happiness of being instruments in converting divers nations; the advantages of monarchical government, the benefit of which, as well as the inconveniences (which, though they feel, they consider not), they daily do enjoy; the piety and the austerity of their religious orders of men and women; the single life of their priests and bishops; the riches of their church; the severity of their fasts, and their exterior observances; the great reputation of their first bishops for faith and sanctity; the known holiness of some of those persons, whose institutes the religious persons pretend to imitate; their miracles, false or true, substantial or imaginary; the casualties and accidents that have happened to their adversaries, which being chances of humanity, are attributed to several causes, according as the fancies of men and their interests are pleased or satisfied; the temporal felicity of their professors; the oblique arts

and indirect proceedings of some of those who departed from them; and, amongst many other things, the names of heretic and schismatic, which they, with infinite pertinacy, fasten upon all that disagree from them. These things, and divers others, may very easily persuade persons of much reason, and more piety, to retain that which they know to have been the religion of their forefathers, which had actual possession and seizure of men's understandings before the opposite professions had a name: and so much the rather, because religion hath more advantages upon the fancy and affections, than it hath upon philosophy and severe discourses, and therefore is the more easily persuaded upon such grounds as these, which are more apt to amuse than to satisfy the understanding.

3. Secondly: If we consider the doctrines themselves, we shall find them to be superstructures ill built, and worse managed; but yet they keep the foundation; they build upon God in Jesus Christ, they profess the apostles' creed, they retain faith and repentance as the supporters of all our hopes of heaven, and believe many more truths than can be proved to be of simple and original necessity to salvation. And, therefore, all the wisest personages of the adverse party allowed to them possibility of salvation, whilst their errors are not faults of their will, but weaknesses and deceptions of the understanding. So that there is nothing in the foundation of faith that can reasonably hinder them to be permitted: the foundation of faith stands secure enough for all their vain and unhandsome superstructures.

But, then, on the other side, if we take account of their doctrines as they relate to good life, or are consistent or inconsistent with civil government, we shall have other considerations.

4. Thirdly: For I consider that many of their doctrines do accidentally teach or lead to ill life: and it will appear to any man that considers the result of these propositions. Attrition (which is a low and imperfect degree of sorrow for sin; or, as others say, a sorrow for sin commenced upon any reason of a religious hope, or fear, or desire, or any thing else) is a sufficient disposition for a man in the sacrament of penance to receive absolution, and be justified before God,

by taking away the guilt of all his sins, and the obligation to eternal pains. So that already the fear of hell is quite removed upon conditions so easy, that many men take more pains to get a groat, than by this doctrine we are obliged to for the curing and acquitting all the greatest sins of a whole life of the most vicious person in the world. And, but that they affright their people with a fear of purgatory, or with the severity of penances in case they will not venture for purgatory (for by their doctrine they may choose or refuse either), there would be nothing in their doctrine or discipline to impede and slacken their proclivity to sin. But then they have as easy a cure for that too, with a little more charge sometimes, but most commonly with less trouble: for there are so many confraternities, so many privileged churches, altars, monasteries, cemeteries, offices, festivals, and so free a concession of indulgences appendant to all these, and a thousand fine devices to take away the fear of purgatory, to commute or expiate penances, that in no sect of men do they, with more ease and cheapness, reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven, than in the Roman communion.

5. And, indeed, if men would consider things upon their true grounds, the Church of Rome should be more reproved upon doctrines that infer ill life, than upon such as are contrariant to faith. For false superstructures do not always destroy faith; but many of the doctrines they teach, if they were prosecuted to the utmost issue, would destroy good life. And therefore, my quarrel with the Church of Rome is greater and stronger upon such points which are not usually considered, than it is upon the ordinary disputes which have, to no very great purpose, so much disturbed Christendom: and I am more scandalized at her for teaching the sufficiency of attrition in the sacrament, for indulging penances so frequently, for remitting all discipline, for making so great a part of religion to consist in externals and ceremonials, for putting more force and energy, and exacting with more severity the commandments of men than the precepts of justice and internal religion; lastly, besides many other things, for promising heaven to persons after a wicked life, upon their impertinent cries and ceremonials transacted by the priests and the dying person. I confess, I wish the

zeal of Christendom were a little more active against these and the like doctrines, and that men would write and live more earnestly against them than as yet they have done.

6. But then what influence this just zeal is to have upon the persons of the professors, is another consideration. For as the Pharisees did preach well, and lived ill, and therefore were to be heard, not imitated; so if these men live well, though they teach ill, they are to be imitated, not heard; their doctrines, by all means, Christian and human, are to be discountenanced, but their persons tolerated 'eatenus;' their profession and decrees to be rejected and condemned, but the persons to be permitted, because, by their good lives, they confute their doctrines, that is, they give evidence that they think no evil to be consequent to such opinions; and if they did, that they live good lives, is argument sufficient that they would themselves cast the first stone against their own opinions, if they thought them guilty of such misdemeanours.

7. Fourthly: But if we consider their doctrines in relation to government and public societies of men, then, if they prove faulty, they are so much the more intolerable by how much the consequents are of greater danger and malice: such doctrines are these,—the pope may dispense with all oaths taken to God or man; he may absolve subjects from their allegiance to their natural prince; faith is not to be kept with heretics; heretical princes may be slain by their subjects.—These propositions are so depressed, and do so immediately communicate with matter and the interests of men, that they are of the same consideration with matters of fact, and are to be handled accordingly. To other doctrines ill life may be consequent; but the connexion of the antecedent and the consequent is not, peradventure, perceived or acknowledged by him that believes the opinion with no greater confidence than he disavows the effect and issue of it: but in these the ill effect is the direct profession and purpose of the opinion; and therefore the man and the man's opinion are to be dealt withal just as the matter of fact is to be judged; for it is an immediate, a perceived, a direct event, and the very purpose of the opinion. Now these opinions are a direct overthrow to all human society and mutual commerce, a destruction of government, and of the laws, and

duty and subordination which we owe to princes: and therefore those men of the Church of Rome that do hold them, and preach them, cannot pretend to the excuses of innocent opinions, and hearty persuasion, to the weakness of humanity, and the difficulty of things; for God hath not left those truths which are necessary for conservation of the public societies of men, so intricate and obscure, but that every one that is honest, and desirous to understand his duty, will certainly know, that no Christian truth destroys a man's being sociable, and a member of the body politic, co-operating to the conservation of the whole as well as of itself. However, if it might happen, that men should sincerely err in such plain matters of fact (for there are fools enough in the world), yet if he hold his peace, no man is to persecute or punish him; for then it is mere opinion, which comes not under political cognizance, that is, that cognizance which only can punish corporally: but if he preaches it, he is actually a traitor, or seditious, or author of perjury, or a destroyer of human society, respectively, to the nature of the doctrine; and the preaching such doctrines cannot claim the privilege and immunity of a mere opinion, because it is as much matter of fact as any the actions of his disciples and confidents, and therefore in such cases is not to be permitted, but judged according to the nature of the effect it hath or may have upon the actions of men.

8. Fifthly: But lastly, in matters merely speculative the case is wholly altered, because the body politic, which only may lawfully use the sword, is not a competent judge of such matters, which have not direct influence upon the body politic, or upon the lives and manners of men as they are parts of a community:—not but that princes or judges temporal may have as much ability as others, but by reason of the incompetency of the authority. And Gallio spoke wisely when he discoursed thus to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should hear you; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters."[r] The man spoke excellent reason; for the cognizance of these things did appertain to men of the other robe. But the ecclesiastical power, which only is competent to take

[r] Acts, xviii. 14.

notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the temporal sword or corporal inflictions. The mere doctrines and opinions of men are things spiritual, and therefore not cognoscible by a temporal authority: and the ecclesiastical authority, which is to take cognizance, is itself so spiritual, that it cannot inflict any punishment corporal.

9. And it is not enough to say, that when the magistrate restrains the preaching such opinions, if any man preaches them he may be punished (and then it is not for his opinion but his disobedience that he is punished); for the temporal power ought not to restrain prophesyings, where the public peace and interest are not certainly concerned. And therefore it is not sufficient to excuse him, whose law in that case, being by an incompetent power, made a scruple where there was no sin.

10. And under this consideration come very many articles of the Church of Rome, which are wholly speculative, which do not derive upon practice, which begin in the understanding and rest there, and have no influence upon life and government, but very accidentally, and by a great many removes; and therefore are to be considered only so far as to guide men in their persuasions, but have no effect upon the persons of men, their bodies, or their temporal condition. I instance in two; prayer for the dead, and the doctrine of transubstantiation; these two to be instead of all the rest.

11. For the first, this discourse is to suppose it false, and we are to direct our proceedings accordingly: and therefore I shall not need to urge with how many fair words and gay pretences this doctrine is set off, apt either to cozen or instruct the conscience of the wisest, according as it is true or false respectively. But we find (says the Romanist) in the history of the Maccabees, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead; which also appears by other testimonies, and by their form of prayers still extant which they used in the captivity. It is very considerable, that since our blessed Saviour did reprove all the evil doctrines and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and did argue concerning the dead and the resurrection against the Sadducees, yet he spake no word against this public practice, but left it as he found it; which he who came to declare to us all the will of his Father, would not have done, if it had not been innocent, pious, and

full of charity. To which, by way of consociation, if we add that St. Paul did pray for Onesiphorus, that "the Lord would shew him a mercy in that day,"[s] that is, according to the style of the New Testament, the day of judgment; the result will be, that although it be probable that Onesiphorus at that time was dead (because in his salutations he salutes his household, without naming him who was the 'majordomo,' against his custom of salutations in other places), yet besides this, the prayer was for such a blessing to him whose demonstration and reception could not be but after death: which implies clearly, that then there is a need of mercy, and, by consequence, the dead people, even to the day of judgment inclusively, are the subject of a misery, the object of God's mercy, and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more glory in the reunion, but to pity them to such purposes in which they need; which because they are not revealed to us in particular, it hinders us not in recommending the persons in particular to God's mercy, but should rather excite our charity and devotion. For it being certain that they have a need of mercy, and it being uncertain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earnest, as not knowing the greatness of their necessity.

12. And if there should be any uncertainty in these arguments, yet its having been the universal practice of the Church of God in all places, and in all ages till within these hundred years, is a very great inducement for any member of the Church to believe, that, in the first traditions of Christianity and the institutions apostolical, there was nothing delivered against this practice, but very much to insinuate or enjoin it; because the practice of it was at the first, and was universal. And if any man shall doubt of this, he shews nothing but that he is ignorant of the records of the Church; it being plain in Tertullian[t] and St. Cyprian[u] (who were the eldest writers of the Latin Church), that in their times it was 'ab antiquo' the custom of the Church to pray for the souls of the faithful departed in the dreadful mysteries. And it was an institution apostolical (says one of them), and so

[s] 2 Tim. i. 18. [t] De Corona Milit. c. iii. et de Monogam. c. x. [u] Ep. 66.

transmitted to the following ages of the Church : and when once it began upon slight grounds and discontent to be contested against by Aerius, the man was presently condemned for a heretic, as appears in Epiphanius.

13. But I am not to consider the arguments for the doctrine itself, although the probability and fair pretence of them may help to excuse such persons, who upon these or the like grounds do heartily believe it : but I am to consider that, whether it be true or false, there is no manner of malice in it, and at the worst it is but a wrong error upon the right side of charity, and concluded against by its adversaries upon the confidence of such arguments, which possibly are not so probable as the grounds pretended for it.

14. And if the same judgment might be made of any more of their doctrines, I think it were better men were not furious in the condemning such questions, which either they understood not upon the grounds of their proper arguments, or at least consider not as subjected in the persons, and lessened by circumstances, by the innocence of the event, or other prudential considerations.

15. But the other article is harder to be judged of, and hath made greater stirs in Christendom, and hath been dashed at with more impetuous objections, and such as do more trouble the question of toleration. For if the doctrine of transubstantiation be false (as upon much evidence we believe it is), then it is accused of introducing idolatry, giving Divine worship to a creature, adoring of bread and wine : and then comes in the precept of God to the Jews, that those prophets who persuaded to idolatry should be slain.[x]

16. But here we must deliberate, for it is concerning the lives of men ; and yet a little deliberation may suffice. For idolatry is a forsaking the true God, and giving Divine worship to a creature or to an idol, that is, to an imaginary god, who hath no foundation in essence or existence ; and is that kind of superstition which by divines is called the superstition of an undue object. Now it is evident that the object of their adoration (that which is represented to them in their minds, their thoughts, and purposes, and by which God principally, if not solely, takes estimate of human actions) in the blessed sacrament, is the only true and eternal God hyposta-

[x] Deut. xiii.

tically joined with his holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually present under the veil of the sacramental signs; and if they thought him not present, they are so far from worshipping the bread in this case, that themselves profess it to be idolatry to do so; which is a demonstration that their soul hath nothing in it that is idolatrical. If their confidence and fanciful opinion have engaged them upon so great mistake (as without doubt they have), yet the will hath nothing in it but what is a great enemy to idolatry: "Et nihil ardet in inferno nisi propria voluntas." And although they have done violence to all philosophy and the reason of man, and undone and cancelled the principles of two or three sciences, to bring in this article; yet they have a divine revelation, whose literal and grammatical sense, if that sense were intended, would warrant them to do violence to all the sciences in the circle. And indeed that transubstantiation is openly and violently against natural reason, is no argument to make them disbelieve it, who believe the mystery of the Trinity in all those niceties of explication which are in the school (and which nowadays pass for the doctrine of the Church), with as much violence to the principles of natural and supernatural philosophy, as can be imagined to be in the point of transubstantiation.

17. But for the article itself; we all say that Christ is there present some way or other extraordinary: and it will not be amiss to worship him at that time, when he gives himself to us in so mysterious a manner, and with so great advantages, especially since the whole office is a consociation of divers actions of religion and worship. Now, in all opinions of those men who think it an act of religion to communicate and to offer, a Divine worship is given to Christ, and is transmitted to him by mediation of that action and that sacrament; and it is no more in the Church of Rome, but that they differ and mistake infinitely in the manner of his presence: which error is wholly seated in the understanding, and does not communicate with the will. For all agree that the divinity and the humanity of the Son of God are the ultimate and adequate object of Divine adoration, and that it is incommunicable to any creature whatsoever; and before they venture to pass an act of adoration, they believe the bread to be annihilated, or turned into his substance who

may lawfully be worshipped: and they who have these thoughts are as much enemies of idolatry as they that understand better how to avoid that inconvenience which is supposed to be the crime which they formally hate, and we materially avoid. This consideration was concerning the doctrine itself.

18. Secondly; and now for any danger to men's persons for suffering such a doctrine, this I shall say, that if they who do it are not formally guilty of idolatry, there is no danger that they whom they persuade to it should be guilty. And what persons soever believe it to be idolatry to worship the sacrament, while that persuasion remains, will never be brought to it, there is no fear of that; and he that persuades them to do it, by altering their persuasions and beliefs, does no hurt but altering the opinions of the men, and abusing their understandings; but when they believe it to be no idolatry, then their so believing it is sufficient security from that crime, which hath so great a tincture and residence in the will, that from thence only it hath its being criminal.

19. Thirdly; however, if it were idolatry, I think the precept of God to the Jews of killing false and idolatrous prophets will be no warrant for Christians so to do. For, in the case of the apostles and the men of Samaria, when James and John would have called for fire to destroy them, even as Elias did under Moses's law, Christ distinguished the spirit of Elias from his own Spirit, and taught them a lesson of greater sweetness, and consigned this truth to all ages of the Church, that such severity is not consistent with the meekness which Christ, by his example and sermons, hath made a precept evangelical: at most it was but a judicial law, and no more of argument to make it necessary to us than the Mosaical precepts of putting adulterers to death, and trying the accused persons by the waters of jealousy.

20. And thus, in these two instances, I have given account what is to be done in toleration of diversity of opinions. The result of which is principally this; let the prince and the secular power have a care the commonwealth be safe. For whether such or such a sect of Christians be to be permitted is a question rather political than religious: for, as for the concernments of religion, these instances have furnished us

with sufficient to determine us in our duties as to that particular, and by one of these all particulars may be judged.

21. And now it were a strange inhumanity to permit Jews in a commonwealth, whose interest is served in their inhabitation; and yet, upon equal grounds of state and policy not to permit differing sects of Christians. For, although possibly there is more danger men's persuasions should be altered in a commixture of divers sects of Christians; yet there is not so much danger when they are changed from Christian to Christian, as if they be turned from Christian to Jew, or Moor, as many are daily in Spain and Portugal.

22. And this is not to be excused by saying the Church hath no power over them "qui foris sunt," as Jews are. For it is true, the Church, in the capacity of spiritual regiments, hath nothing to do with them, because they are not her diocese: yet the prince hath to do with them when they are subjects of his regiment. They may not be excommunicate any more than a stone may be killed, because they are not of the Christian communion: but they are living persons, parts of the commonwealth, infinitely deceived in their religion, and very dangerous if they offer to persuade men to their opinions, and are the greatest enemies of Christ, whose honour and the interest of whose service a Christian prince is bound with all his power to maintain. And when the question is of punishing disagreeing persons with death, the Church hath equally nothing to do with them both, for she hath nothing to do with the temporal sword; but the prince, whose subjects equally Christians and Jews are, hath equal power over their persons; for a Christian is no more a subject than a Jew is, the prince hath upon them both the same power of life and death: so that the Jew, by being no Christian, is not 'foris,' or any more an exempt person for his body or his life, than the Christian is: and yet in all churches where the secular power hath temporal reason to tolerate the Jews, they are tolerated without any scruple in religion. Which thing is of more consideration, because the Jews are direct blasphemers of the Son of God, and blasphemy by their own law, the law of Moses, is made capital; and might with greater reason be inflicted upon them, who acknowledge its obligation, than urged upon Christians, as an authority

enabling princes to put them to death, who are accused of accidental and consecutive blasphemy and idolatry respectively, which yet they hate and disavow with much zeal and heartiness of persuasion. And I cannot yet learn a reason why we shall not be more complying with them who are of the household of faith: for at least they are children, though they be but rebellious children; (and if they were not, what hath the mother to do with them any more than with the Jews?) they are in some relation or habitude of the family; for they are consigned with the same baptism, profess the same faith delivered by the apostles, are erected in the same hope, and look for the same glory to be revealed to them at the coming of their common Lord and Saviour, to whose service, according to their understanding, they have vowed themselves. And if the disagreeing persons be to be esteemed as heathens and publicans, yet not worse. "Have no company with them;" that is the worst that is to be done to such a man, in St. Paul's judgment: "yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

SECTION XXI.

Of the Duty of particular Churches in allowing Communion.

From these premises we are easily instructed concerning the lawfulness or duty respectively of Christian communion, which is differently to be considered in respect of particular churches to each other, and of particular men to particular churches. For as for particular churches, they are bound to allow communion to all those that profess the same faith, upon which the apostles did give communion. For whatsoever preserves us as members of the Church, gives us title to the communion of saints; and whatsoever faith or belief that is to which God hath promised heaven, that faith makes us members of the catholic Church. Since, therefore, the judicial acts of the Church are then most prudent and religious, when they nearest imitate the example and piety of God; to make the way to heaven straiter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with those with whom God will vouchsafe to be united, and to refuse our charity to those who have the

same faith, because they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing necessary which we overvalue, is impious and schismatical; it infers tyranny on one part, and persuades and tempts to uncharitableness and animosities on both; it dissolves societies, and is an enemy to peace; it busies men in impertinent wranglings; and by names of men and titles of factions it consigns the interested parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect those advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of Christian religion and societies.

2. And, therefore, Vincentius Lirinensis,[y] and indeed the whole Church, accounted the Donatists heretics upon this very ground, because they did imperiously deny their communion to all that were not of their persuasion: whereas the authors of that opinion for which they first did separate and make a sect, because they did not break the Church's peace, nor magisterially prescribe to others, were in that disagreeing and error accounted Catholics. "Divisio enim et disunio facit vos hæreticos, pax et unitas faciunt catholicos," said St. Austin.[z] And to this sense is that of St. Paul, "If I had all faith, and had not charity, I am nothing." He who, upon confidence of his true belief, denies a charitable communion to his brother, loses the reward of both. And if Pope Victor had been as charitable to the Asiatics as Pope Anicetus and St. Polycarp were to each other in the same disagreeing concerning Easter, Victor had not been πληκτικώτερον καταπέμενος, so bitterly reproved and condemned as he was for the uncharitable managing of his disagreeing, by Polycrates and Irenæus. "Concordia enim, quæ est caritatis effectus, est unio voluntatem, non opinionum:—True faith, which leads to charity, leads on to that which unites wills and affections, not opinions."[a]

3. Upon these or the like considerations the Emperor Zeno published his ἑνωτικὸν, in which he made the Nicene creed to be the medium of catholic communion; and although he lived after the Council of Chalcedon, yet he made not the decrees of that council an instrument of its restraint and limit, as preferring the peace of Christendom and the union of

[y] Cap. xi. Vide Pacian. Epist. ad Sempron. 2.
[z] Lib. ii. c. 95. contra liter. Petilian.
[a] Euseb. lib. v. c. 25. 26. Aquin. ii. 2. q. 37. a. 1.

charity far before a forced or pretended unity of persuasion, which never was nor ever will be real and substantial: and although it were very convenient if it could be had, yet it is therefore not necessary, because it is impossible. And if men please, whatever advantages to the public would be consequent to it, may be supplied by a charitable compliance and mutual permission of opinion, and the offices of a brotherly affection prescribed us by the laws of Christianity. And we have seen it, that all sects of Christians, when they have an end to be served upon a third, have permitted that liberty to a second which we now contend for, and which they formerly denied, but now grant, that by joining hands they might be the stronger to destroy the third. The Arians and Miletians joined against the Catholics; the Catholics and Novatians joined against the Arians. Now if men would do that for charity which they do for interest, it were handsomer and more ingenuous: for that they do permit each other's disagreeings for their interest's sake, convinceth them of the lawfulness of the thing, or else the unlawfulness of their own proceedings. And therefore it were better they would serve the ends of charity than of faction; for then that good end would hallow the proceeding, and make it both more prudent and more pious, while it serves the design of religious purposes.

SECTION XXII.

That particular Men may communicate with Churches of different Persuasions; and how far they may do it.

1. As for the duty of particular men in the question of communicating with churches of different persuasions, it is to be regulated according to the laws of those churches. For if they require no impiety or any thing unlawful as the condition of their communion, then they communicate with them as they are servants of Christ, as disciples of his doctrine and subjects to his laws, and the particular distinguishing doctrine of their sect hath no influence or communication with him, who from another sect is willing to communicate with all the servants of their common Lord. For since no church of one name is infallible, a wise man may have either the

misfortune or a reason to believe of every one in particular, that she errs in some article or other, either he cannot communicate with any, or else he may communicate with all that do not make a sin, or the profession of any error, to be the condition of their communion. And therefore, as every particular church is bound to tolerate disagreeing persons in the senses and for the reasons above explicated; so every particular person is bound to tolerate her, that is, not to refuse her communion when he may have it upon innocent conditions. For what is it to me if the Greek Church denies procession of the third person from the second, so she will give me the right hand of fellowship (though I affirm it), therefore, because I profess the religion of Jesus Christ, and retain all matters of faith and necessity? But this thing will scarce be reduced to practice; for few churches that have framed bodies of confession and articles, will endure any person that is not of the same confession: which is a plain demonstration that such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt, by becoming instruments of separating and dividing communions, and making unnecessary or uncertain propositions a certain means of schism and disunion. But then men would do well to consider whether or no such proceedings do not derive the guilt of schism upon them who least think it; and whether of the two is the schismatic, he that makes unnecessary and (supposing the state of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that disobeys them, because he cannot, without doing violence to his conscience, believe them; he that parts communion because without sin he could not entertain it, or they that have not made it necessary for him to separate by requiring such conditions, which to no man are simply necessary, and to his particular are either sinful or impossible.

2. The sum of all is this: there is no security in any thing or to any person but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither sin nor error does impede it from producing its proportionate and intended effect; because it is a direct deletery to sin and an excuse to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmless. And, indeed, this is the intendment and design of faith. For (that we may join both ends of this discourse together) therefore certain articles are prescribed to us, and propounded to our understanding, that so we might be supplied with instructions, with

motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Christ. So that obedience is just so consequent to faith, as the acts of will are to the dictates of the understanding. Faith therefore being in order to obedience, and so far excellent as itself is a part of obedience, or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it; it is evident, that if obedience and a good life be secured upon the most reasonable and proper grounds of Christianity, that is, upon the apostles' creed, then faith also is secured. Since whatsoever is beside the duties, the order of a good life cannot be a part of faith, because upon faith a good life is built: all other articles, by not being necessary, are no otherwise to be required but as they are to be obtained and found out, that is, morally, and fallibly, and humanly. It is fit all truths be promoted fairly and properly, and yet but few articles prescribed magisterially, nor framed into symbols and bodies of confession; least of all, after such composures, should men proceed so furiously as to say all disagreeing after such declarations to be damnable for the future, and capital for the present. But this very thing is reason enough to make men more limited in their prescriptions, because it is more charitable in such suppositions so to do.

3. But in the thing itself, because few kinds of errors are damnable, it is reasonable as few should be capital. And because every thing that is damnable in itself and before God's judgment-seat is not discernible before men (and questions disputable are of this condition), it is also very reasonable that fewer be capital than what are damnable, and that such questions should be permitted to men to believe, because they must be left to God to judge. It concerns all persons to see that they do the best to find out truth; and if they do, it is certain that, let the error be ever so damnable, they shall escape the error, or the misery, of being damned for it. And if God will not be angry at men for being invincibly deceived, why should men be angry one at another? For he that is most displeased at another man's error, may also be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his understanding: for if he may fail in what he can choose, he may also fail in what he cannot choose: his understanding is no more secured than his will, nor his faith more than his obedience. It is his own fault if he offends God in either: but whatsoever is not

to be avoided, as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the best and most inquisitive of men, are not offences against God, and therefore not to be punished or restrained by men: but all such opinions, in which the public interests of the commonwealth, and the foundation of faith and a good life are not concerned, are to be permitted freely. "Quisque abundet in sensu suo," was the doctrine of St. Paul; and that is argument and conclusion too: and they were excellent words which St. Ambrose said in attestation of this great truth, "Nec imperiale est, libertatem dicendi negare; nec sacerdotale, quod sentias non dicere." I end with a story which I find in the Jews' books. "When Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers; he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him who was a hundred years of age: he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down: but observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was: he replied, I thrust him away because he did not worship thee. God answered him, I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me; and couldst not thou endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble? Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction." Go thou, and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

Ἅγιος Ἰσχυρός.

UNUM NECESSARIUM;

OR,

THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

OF

REPENTANCE.

DESCRIBING

THE NECESSITIES AND MEASURES OF A STRICT, A HOLY, AND A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

AND

RESCUED FROM POPULAR ERRORS.

The following treatise is, in itself, and with reference to its immediate subject, less controversial than devotional. As, however, it gave occasion to several of Taylor's writings which are strictly polemical, and from which it could hardly he separated without inconvenience to the reader; as it contains, moreover, some controverted positions, and as the author himself professes, at least incidentally, to assail some of the opinions usual among Christians on the subject of Repentance, it has been thought advisahle to give it a place in the present volume, rather than among those works which exclusively refer to practice or devotion.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

AND NOBLEST LORD,

RICHARD, EARL OF CARBERY,

&c.

MY LORD,

THE duty of repentance is of so great and universal concernment, a catholicon to the evils of the soul of every man, that if there be any particular in which it is worthy the labours of the whole ecclesiastical calling, 'to be instant in season and out of season,' it is in this duty; and therefore I hope I shall be excused, if my discourses of repentance, like the duty itself, be perpetually increasing, and I may, like the widow in the Gospel to the unjust judge, at least hope to prevail with some men by my importunity. Men have found out so many devices and arts to cozen themselves, that they will rather admit any weak discourses and images of reason, than think it necessary to repent speedily, severely, and effectively. We find that sinners are prosperous, and God is long before he strikes; and it is always another man's case, when we see a judgment happen

upon a sinner, we feel it not ourselves, for when we do, it is commonly past remedy. Indeed it was to be pitied in the heathen, that many of them were tempted to take the thriving side, when religion itself was unprosperous. When Jupiter suffered his golden sceptre to be stole, and the image never frowned; and a bold fellow would scrape the ivory thigh of Hercules, and go away without a broken pate, for all the club that was in his hand; they thought they had reason to think there was no more sacredness in the images of their gods, than in the statues of Vagellius:[a] and because the event of all regular actions was not regular and equal, but Catiline was hewn down by the consul's sword for his rebellion, and for the same thing Cæsar became a prince, they believed that the power that governed these extra-regular events, must itself be various and changeable, and they called it 'Fortune.' But, my Lord, that Christians should thus dote upon temporal events, and the little baits of fishes and the meat of dogs, adoring every thing that is prosperous, and hating that condition of things that brings trouble, is not to be pardoned to them who profess themselves servants and disciples of a crucified Lord and Master. But it is upon the same account, that men are so hardly brought to repent, or to believe that repentance hath in it so many parts, and requires so much labour, and exacts such caution, and cannot be performed without the best assistances, or the greatest skill in spiritual notices. They find sin pleasant and prosperous, gay, and in the fashion: and though wise men

[a] Juv. xiii. 119.

know it is better to be pleased than to be merry, to have rest and satisfaction in wisdom and perfective notices of things, than to laugh loud, and fright sobriety away with noises, and dissolution, and forgetfulness: yet this severer pleasure seems dull and flat, and men generally betake themselves to the wildnesses of sin, and hate to have it interrupted by the intervening of the sullen grace of repentance. It was a sprightly saying of him in the comedy,

> Ego vitam Deorum propterea sempiternam esse arbitror,
> Quòd voluptates eorum propriæ sunt: nam mihi immortalitas
> Parta est, si nulla huic ægritudo gaudio intercesserit.[b]

"Our immortality is to be reckoned by the continuance of our pleasure; my life is then perpetual, when my delights are not interrupted." And this is the immortality, that too many men look after by incompetent means. But to be called upon to repentance, and when men inquire what that is, to be told it is all the duty of a returning man; the extermination of sin, the mortification of all our irregular appetites, and all that perfection of righteousness which can consist with our state of imperfection; and that in order to these purposes, we must not refuse the sharpest instruments, that 'they may be even cut off which trouble us,' but that we suffer all the severity of voluntary or imposed discipline, according as it shall be judged necessary, this is it which will trouble men; such, I mean, who love a beggarly ease before a laborious thriving trade (a foul stable to some beasts is better than a fair way); and therefore it is, that since all Christians are convinced of

[b] Andr. v. 5. 3.

the necessity, the indispensable necessity of repentance, they have resolved to admit it, but they also resolve they will not understand what it is. 'Una herclè falsa lacrimula;' one or two forced tears against a good time: and, believe it, that is a great matter too, that is not ordinary. But if men lose an estate,

——————— Nemo dolorem
Fingit in hoc casu, vestem diducere summam
Contentus, vexare oculos humore coacto.[c]

Men need not to dissemble tears or sorrow in that case: but as if men were in no danger when they are enemies to God, and as if to lose heaven were no great matter, and to be cast into hell were a very tolerable condition, and such as a man might very well undergo, and laugh heartily for all that;—they seem so unconcerned in the actions of religion, and in their obedience to the severe laws of repentance, that it looks as if men had no design in the world, but to be suffered to die quietly, to perish tamely, without being troubled with the angry arguments of the churchmen, who by all means desire they should live and recover, and dwell with God for ever. Or if they can be forced to the further entertainments of repentance, it is nothing but a calling for mercy, an ineffective prayer, a moist cloud, a resolution for to-day, and a solemn shower at the most.

Mens immota manet, lacrimæ volvuntur inanes.[d]

The mind is not changed, though the face be: for repentance is thought to be just as other graces, fit for their proper season, like fruits in their own

[c] Juv. xiii. 131. [d] Æn. iv. 449.

month; but then every thing else must have its day too: we shall sin, and we must repent; but sin will come again, and so may repentance: for 'there is a time for every thing under the sun;' and the time for repentance is when we can sin no more, when every objection is answered, when we can have no more excuse; and they who go upon that principle will never do it till it be too late: for every age hath temptations of its own, and they that have been used to the yoke all their lifetime, will obey their sin when it comes in any shape, in which they can take any pleasure. But men are infinitely abused, and by themselves most of all. For repentance is not like the summer fruits, fit to be taken a little, and in their own time; it is like bread, the provisions and support of our life, the entertainment of every day, but it is 'the bread of affliction' to some, and 'the bread of carefulness' to all: and he that preaches this with the greatest zeal and the greatest severity, it may be he takes the liberty of an enemy, but he gives the counsel and the assistance of a friend.

My Lord, I have been so long acquainted with the secrets of your spirit and religion, that I know I need not make an apology for dedicating this severe book to you. You know, according to the prudence which God hath given you, that he that flatters you is your enemy, and you need not be flattered; for he that desires passionately to be a good man and a religious, to be the servant of God and be saved, will not be fond of any vanity, and nothing else can need to be flattered: but I have presented to your Lordship this discourse, not only to be a testi-

mony to the world, how great a love, and how great an honour I have for you, but even by ascribing you into this relation, to endear you the rather every day more and more to the severest doctrines and practices of holiness. I was invited to make something to this by an honourable person who is now with God, and who desired his needs should be served by my ministry. But when I had entered upon it, I found it necessary to do it in order to more purposes, and in prosecution of the method of my other studies. All which as they are designed to God's glory and the ministry of souls, so if by them I can signify my obligations to your Lordship, which by your great nobleness do still increase, I shall not esteem them wholly ineffective, even of some of those purposes whither they are intended; for truly, my Lord, in whatsoever I am or can do, I desire to appear,

My noblest Lord,

Your Honour's most obliged

And most affectionate Servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

THE PREFACE

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND AND RELIGIOUS FATHERS

BRIAN, LORD BISHOP OF SARUM,

AND

JOHN, LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

AND TO THE MOST REVEREND AND RELIGIOUS CLERGY OF ENGLAND, MY DEAR BRETHREN.

MEN, BRETHREN, AND FATHERS,

THE wiser part of mankind hath seen so much trifling in the conduct of disputations, so much partiality, such earnest desires of reputation, such resolution to prevail by all means, so great mixture of interest in the contention, so much mistaking of the main question, so frequent excursions into differing matter, so many personal quarrels and petty animosities, so many wranglings about those things that shall never be helped, that is, the errors and infirmities of men; and, after all this (which also must needs be consequent to it), so little fruit and effect of questions, no man being the wiser, or changed from error to truth, but from error to error most frequently: and there are in the very vindication of truth so many incompetent, uncertain, and untrue things offered, that if by chance some truth be gotten, we are not very great gainers, because, when the whole account is cast up, we shall find, or else they that are disinterested will observe, that there is more error than truth in the whole purchase; and still no man is satisfied, and every side keeps its own, unless where folly or interest makes some few persons to change; and still more weakness and more impertinences crowd into the whole affair upon every reply, and more yet upon the rejoinder; and when men have wrangled tediously

and vainly, they are but where they were; save only, that they may remember they suffered infirmity, and, it may be, the transport of passions, and uncharitable expressions; and all this for an unrewarding interest, for that which is sometimes uncertain itself, unrevealed, unuseful, and unsatisfying; that in the event of things, and after being wearied for little or nothing, men have now in a very great proportion left it quite off, as unsatisfying waters, and have been desirous of more material nourishment, and of such notices of things and just assistances, as may promote their eternal interest.

And, indeed, it was great reason and high time that they should do so: for when they were employed in rowing up and down in uncertain seas, to find something that was not necessary, it was certain they would less attend to that which was more worthy their inquiry; and the enemy of mankind knew that to be a time of his advantage, and accordingly sowed tares while we so slept; and we felt a real mischief while we contended for an imaginary and fantastic good. For things were come to that pass, that it was the character of a good man to be zealous for a sect, and all of every party respectively, if they were earnest and impatient of contradiction, were sure to be saved by their own preachers; and holiness of life was not so severely demanded, but that men believe their country articles; and heaven-gates at no hand might be permitted to stand open to any one else. Thence came hatred, variance, emulation, and strifes; and the wars of Christendom which have been kindled by disputers, and the evil lives which were occasioned and encouraged by those proceedings, are the best confutation in the world of all such disputations.

But now when we come to search into that part of theology which is most necessary, in which the life of Christianity, and the interest of souls, the peace of Christendom, and the union of minds, the sweetness of society, and the support of government, the usefulness and comfort of our lives, the advancement of virtue, and the just measures of honour; we find many things disordered, the tables of the commandments broken in pieces, and some parts are lost and some disordered, and into the very practice of Christians there are crept so many material errors, that although God made nothing plainer, yet now nothing is more difficult and

involved, uncertain and discomposed, than many of the great lines and propositions in moral theology: nothing is more neglected, more necessary, or more mistaken. For although very many run into holy orders without just abilities, and think their province is well discharged if they can preach upon Sundays; and men observing the ordinary preaching to be little better than ordinary talk, have been made bold to venture into the holy sept, and invade the secrets of the temple, as thinking they can talk at the same rate which they observe to be the manner of vulgar sermons: yet they who know to give a just value to the best things, know that the sacred office of a priest, a minister of religion, does not only require great holiness, that they may acceptably offer the Christian sacrifices and oblations of prayer and eucharist for the people, and become their fairest examples; but also great abilities, and wise notices of things and persons, strict observation, deep remembrances, prudent applications, courage and caution, severity and mercy, diligence and wisdom, that they may dispense the excellent things of Christianity to the same effect whither they were designed in the councils of eternity, that is, to the glory of God and the benefit of souls.

But it is a sad thing to observe how weakly the souls of men and women are guided; with what false measures they are instructed, how their guides oftentimes strive to please men rather than to save them, and accordingly have fitted their discourses and sermons with easy theorems, such which the schools of learning have fallen upon by chance, or interest, or flattery, or vicious necessities, or superinduced arts, or weak compliances. But from whatsoever cause it does proceed, we feel the thing: there are so many false principles in the institutions and systems of moral or casuistical divinity, and they taught so generally, and believed so unquestionably, and so fitted to the dispositions of men, so complying with their evil inclinations, so apt to produce error and confidence, security and a careless conversation, that neither can there be any way better to promote the interest of souls, nor to vindicate truth, nor to adorn the science itself, or to make religion reasonable and intelligible, or to promote holy life, than by rescuing our schools, and pulpits, and private persuasions, from the believing such propositions which have prevailed very much and very long, but

yet which are not only false, but have immediate influence upon the lives of men, so as to become to them a state of universal temptation from the severities and wisdom of holiness.

When, therefore, I had observed concerning the Church of England [which is the most excellently instructed with a body of true articles, and doctrines of holiness, with a discipline material and prudent, with a government apostolical, with dignities neither splendid nor sordid, too great for contempt, and too little for envy (unless she had met with little people and greatly malicious), and indeed with every thing that could instruct or adorn a Christian church, so that she wanted nothing but the continuance of peace, and what she already was]; that amongst all her heaps of excellent things, and books by which her sons have ministered to piety and learning both at home and abroad, there was the greatest scarcity of books of cases of conscience; and that while I stood watching that some or other should undertake it according to the ability which God gave them; and yet every one found himself hindered or diverted, persecuted or disabled, and still the work was left undone, I suffered myself to be invited to put my weak hand to this work, rather than that it should not be done at all. But by that time I made some progression in the first preparatory discourses to the work, I found that a great part of that learning was supported by principles very weak and very false: and that it was in vain to dispute concerning a single case whether it were lawful or no, when, by the general discoursings of men, it might be permitted to live in states of sin without danger or reproof, as to the final event of souls. I thought it therefore necessary, by way of address and preparation to the publication of the particulars, that it should appear to be necessary for a man to live a holy life; and that it could be of concern to him to inquire into the very minutes of his conscience: for if it be no matter how men live, and if the hopes of heaven can well stand with a wicked life, there is nothing in the world more unnecessary than to inquire after cases of conscience. And if it be sufficient for a man at the last to cry for pardon for having all his lifetime neither regarded laws nor conscience, certainly they have found out a better compendium of religion, and need not be troubled

with variety of rules and cautions of carefulness and a lasting holiness; nor think concerning any action or state of life, whether it be lawful or not lawful; for it is all one whether it be or no, since neither one nor the other will easily change the event of things.

For let it be imagined, what need there can be that any man should write cases of conscience, or read them, if it be lawful for a man thus to believe and speak.

I have indeed often, in my younger years, been affrighted with the fearful noises of damnation, and the ministers of religion, for what reason they best know, did call upon me to deny my appetite, to cross my desires, to destroy my pleasures, to live against my nature; and I was afraid as long as I could not consider the secrets of things; but now I find that in their own books there are for me so many confidences and securities, that those fears were most unreasonable; and that as long as I live by the rules and measures of nature, I do not offend God, or if I do I shall soon find a pardon. For I consider, that the commandments are impossible, and what is not possible to be done we are not to take care of: and he that fails in one instance, cannot be saved without a pardon, not by his obedience; and he that fails in all, may be saved by pardon and grace. For the case is so, that we are sinners naturally, made so before we were born; and nature can never be changed until she be destroyed: and since all our irregularities spring from that root, it is certain they ought not to be imputed to us, and a man can no more fear God's anger for being inclined to all sin, than for being hungry or miserable; and therefore I expect from the wisdom and goodness of God some provisions, which will so extinguish this solemn and artificial guilt, that it shall be as if it were not. But, in the meantime, the certainty of sinning will proceed. For, besides that I am told that a man hath no liberty, but a liberty to sin, and this definite liberty is in plain English a very necessity, we see it by a daily experience that those who call themselves good men, are such who do what they would not, and cannot do what they would; and if it be so, it is better to do what I have a mind to quietly, than to vex myself, and yet do it nevertheless: and that it is so, I am taught in almost all the discourses I have read or heard upon the seventh chapter to the Romans: and therefore if I may

have leave to do consonantly to what I am taught to believe, I must confess myself to be under the dominion of sin, and therefore must obey; and that I am bidden to obey unwillingly, and am told that the striving against sin is indeed ordinarily ineffective, and yet is a sign of regeneration; I can soon do that, strive against it, and pray against it; but I cannot hope to prevail in either, because I am told beforehand, that even the regenerate are under the power of sin: they will and do not; they do and will not; and so it is with me; I would fain be perfect if I could; but I must not hope it; and therefore I would only do my actions so reasonably, that I would not be tied to vex myself for what I cannot help; or to lose the pleasure of my sin by fretting at it, when it is certain it will be done, and yet I shall remain in the state of regeneration. And who can help all this, but God, whose mercy is indeed infinite; and although in the secret dispensation of affairs, he hath concluded all under sin, yet he had no purpose we should therefore perish; but it was done that he might have mercy upon all; that is, that we may glorify him for supplying our needs, pardoning our sins, relieving our infirmities? And therefore when I consider that God's mercy hath no limit in itself, and is made definite only by the capacity of the object, it is not to be doubted, but he loves his creatures so well, that we shall all rejoice in our being freed from eternal fears. For to justify my hopes, why may not I be confident of heaven for all my sins, since the imputation of Christ's righteousness is that by which I shall be justified? my own is but 'like a menstruous rag,' and the 'just falls seven times a-day;' but Christ's cross pays for all. And therefore I am confident I shall do well. For I am one of those for whom Christ died; and I believe this; this faith is not to be reproved, for this is that which justifies, who shall condemn me? It is not a good life that justifies a man before God, but it is faith in the special promises; for indeed it being impossible to live innocently, it is necessary that a way of God's own finding out should be relied upon. Only this indeed I do, I do avoid the capital sins, blasphemies, and horrid murders; I am γενναίως ἁμαρτάνων,—'I sin like a gentleman,' not like a thief, I suffer infirmities, but do not do like a devil; and though I sin, yet I repent speedily, and when I sin again, I repent again, and my spiritual state is like my natural, day

and night succeed each other by a never-failing revolution. I sin indeed in some instances, but I do my duty in many; and every man hath his infirmities; no man can say, My soul is pure from sin; but I hope that because I repent still as I sin, my sins are but as single actions; and since I resist them what I can, I hope they will be reckoned to me but as sins of infirmity, without which no man is or can be in this state of imperfection. For if I pray against a sin, and my spirit does resist it, though the flesh prevails, yet I am in the state of grace. For that I may own publicly what I am publicly taught; a man cannot be soon out of the state of grace, but he may be soon in. God's love is lasting and perpetual when it hath once begun; and when the curtain is drawn over the state of grace by the intervening of a sin, yet as soon as ever we begin to cry for pardon, nay, when we do but say we will confess our sins, nay, when we do but resolve we will, God meets us with his pardon, and prevents us with some portions of it. And let things be at the worst they can, yet he that confesseth his sins to God, shall find mercy at the hands of God; and he hath established a holy ministry in his Church to absolve all penitents: and if I go to one of them, and tell the sad story of my infirmity, the good man will presently warrant my pardon, and absolve me. But then I remember this also, that as my infirmity that is unavoidable shall not prejudice me, so neither shall any time prejudice my repentance. For if on my death-bed I cry unto God for pardon, and turn heartily unto God in the very instant of my dissolution, I am safe; because whenever a man converts to God, in the same instant God turns to him, or else it were possible for God to hate him that loves God, and our repentance should in some periods be rejected, expressly against all the promises. For it is an act of contrition, an act of the love of God, that reconciles us; and I shall be very unfortunate, if in the midst of all my pains, when my needs increase, and my fears are pregnant, and myself am ready to accept pardon upon any terms, I shall not then do so much as one act of a hearty sorrow and contrition. But, however, I have the consent of almost all men, and all the schools of learning in the world, that after a wicked life my repentance at last shall be accepted. St. Ambrose, who was a good probable doctor, and one as fit to be relied on as any man else, in his funeral

oration of Valentinian hath these words; "Blessed is he truly, who even in his old age hath amended his error; blessed is he, who even just before the stroke of death turns his mind from vice. Blessed are they whose sins are covered, for it is written, Cease from evil, and do good, and dwell for evermore. Whoever therefore shall leave off from sin, and shall in any age be turned to better things, he hath the pardon of his former sins, which either he hath confessed with the affections of a penitent, or turned from them with the desires of amends. But this prince hath company enough in the way of his obtaining pardon; for there are very many who could in their old age recall themselves from the slipperiness and sins of their youth; but seldom is any one to be found, who in his youth with a serious sobriety will bear the heavy yoke." And I remember that when Faustus, bishop of Rhegium, being asked by Paulinus, bishop of Nola, from Marinus the hermit, Whether a man who was involved in carnal sins and exercised all that a criminous person could do, might obtain a full pardon, if he did suddenly repent in the day of his death? did answer peevishly, and severely, and gave no hopes, nor would allow pardon to any such; Avitus, the archbishop of Vienna, reproved his pride and his morosity, and gave express sentence for the validity of such a repentance:[e] and that gentleness hath been the continual doctrine of the Church for many ages; insomuch that in the year 1584, Henry Kyspenning, a canon of Zante, published a book, entitled, "The Evangelical Doctrine of the Meditation of Death, with solid Exhortations and Comforts to the Sick, from the Currents of Scripture, and the Commentaries of the Fathers,"—where teaching the sick man how to answer the objections of Satan, he makes this to be the fifteenth;[f] 'I repent too late of my sins.' He bids him answer, 'It is not late if it be true: and to the thief upon the cross Christ said, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise:' and afterward, a short prayer easily pierceth heaven, so it be darted forth with a vehement force of the spirit. Truly the history of the Kings tells, that David, who was so great a sinner, used but three syllables; for he is read to have said no more but 'Peccavi,'—I have sinned. For St. Ambrose said, the flame of the sacrifice of his heart ascends up to heaven. Because we have a

[e] Epist. 4. [f] Lib. iii. c. 11.

merciful and gentle Lord: and the correction of our sins needs not much time, but great fervour. And to the same purpose are the words of Alcuinus, the tutor of Charles the Great: "It behoves us to come to repentance with all confidence, and by faith to believe undoubtedly, that by repentance our sins may be blotted out: 'etiamsi in ultimo vitæ spiritu commissa pœniteat,—although we repent of our sins in the last breath of our life.'"

Now, after all these grounds of hope and confidence to a sinner, what can be pretended in defiance of a sinful life? and since men will hope upon one ground, though it be trifling and inconsiderable, when there are so many doctrinal grounds of hopes, established propositions, parts of religion, and articles of faith, to rely upon (for, all these particulars before reckoned, men are called upon to believe earnestly, and are hated, and threatened, and despised, if they do not believe them), what is there left to discourage the evil lives of men, or to lessen a full iniquity, since, upon the account of the premises, either we may do what we list without sin, or sin without punishment, or go on without fear, or repent without danger, and without scruple be confident of heaven?

And now, if moral theology rely upon such notices as these, I thought my work was at an end before I had well finished the first steps of my progression. The whole sum of affairs was in danger, and therefore I need not trouble myself or others with consideration of the particulars. I therefore thought it necessary first to undermine these false foundations; and since an inquiry into the minutes of conscience, is commonly the work of persons that live holily, I ought to take care that this be accounted necessary, and all false warrants to the contrary be cancelled, that there might be many 'idonei auditores,—persons competent to hear' and read, and such who ought to be promoted and assisted in their holy intendments. And I bless God there are very many such; and though iniquity does abound, yet God's grace is conspicuous and remarkable in the lives of very many, to whom I shall design all the labours of my life, as being dear to God, and my dear brethren in the service of Jesus. But I would fain have the churches as full as I could before I begin; and therefore I esteemed it necessary to publish these papers before my other, as containing the greatest

lines of conscience, and the most general cases of our whole life, even all the doctrine of repentance, upon which all the hopes of man depend through Jesus Christ.

But I have other purposes also in the publication of this book. The ministers of the Church of Rome (who ever love to fish in troubled waters, and to oppress the miserable and afflicted, if they differ from them in a proposition) use all the means they can to persuade our people, that the man that is afflicted is not alive; that the Church of England, now it is a persecuted church, is no church at all; and though (blessed be God) our propositions, and doctrines, and liturgy, and communion, are sufficiently vindicated in despite of all their petty oppositions and trifling arrests, yet they will never leave making noises and outcries; which, for my part, I can easily neglect, as finding them to be nothing but noise. But yet I am willing to try the rights and excellences of a church with them upon other accounts; by such indications as are the most proper tokens of life, I mean propositions of holiness, the necessities of a holy life: for certainly that church is most to be followed who brings us nearest to God; and they make our approaches nearest, who teach us to be most holy, and whose doctrines command the most excellent and severest lives. But if it shall appear that the prevailing doctrines in the Church of Rome do consequently teach, or directly warrant, impiety, or, which is all one, are too easy in promising pardon, and for it have no defences, but distinctions of their own inventing, I suppose it will be a greater reproof to their confidence and bold pretensions, than a discourse against one of their immaterial propositions, that have neither certainty nor usefulness. But I had rather that they would preach severity than be reproved for their careless propositions, and therefore am well pleased that, even amongst themselves, some are so convinced of the weakness of their usual ministries of repentance, that as much as they dare, they call upon the priests to be more deliberate in their absolutions, and severe in their impositions of satisfactions, requiring a longer time of repentance before the penitents be reconciled.

Monsieur Arnauld, of the Sorbonne, hath appeared publicly in reproof of a frequent and easy communion, without the just and long preparations of repentance, and its proper exercises

and ministry. Petavius the Jesuit hath opposed him ; the one cries, 'The present Church,' the other, 'The ancient Church ;' and as Petavius is too hard for his adversary in the present authority, so Monsieur Arnauld hath the clearest advantage in the pretensions of antiquity and the arguments of truth ; from which Petavius and his abettor Bagot the Jesuit have no escape or defensative, but by distinguishing repentance into solemn and sacramental : which is just as if they should say, repentance is twofold ; one, such as was taught and practised by the Primitive Church ; the other, that which is in use this day in the Church of Rome : for there is not so much as one pregnant testimony in antiquity for the first four hundred years, that there was any repentance thought of, but repentance towards God, and sometimes performed in the Church, in which, after their stations were performed, they were admitted to the holy communion ; excepting only in the danger or article of death, in which they hastened the communion, and enjoined the stations to be afterward completed, in case they did recover, and if they did not, they left the event to God. But this question of theirs can never be ended upon the new principles, nor shall be freely argued because of their interest. For whoever are obliged to profess some false propositions, shall never from thence find out an entire truth ; but, like casks in a troubled sea, sometimes they will be under water, sometimes above. For the productions of error are infinite, but most commonly monstrous : and in the fairest of them there will be some crooked or deformed part.

But of the thing itself I have given such accounts as I could, being engaged on no side, and the servant of no interest, and have endeavoured to represent the dangers of every sinner, the difficulty of obtaining pardon, the many parts and progressions of repentance, the severity of the Primitive Church, their rigid doctrines and austere disciplines ; the degrees of easiness and complyings that came in by negligence ; and I desire that the effect should be, that all the pious and religious curates of souls in the Church of England would endeavour to produce so much fear and reverence, caution and wariness, in all their penitents, that they should be willing to undergo more severe methods in their restitution than now they do : that men should not dare to

approach to the holy sacrament, as soon as ever their foul hands are wet with a drop of holy rain; but that they should expect the periods of life, and when they have given to their curate fair testimony of a hearty repentance, and know it to be so within themselves, they may with comfort to all parties, communicate with holiness and joy. For I conceive this to be that event of things which was designed by St. Paul[s] in that excellent advice: "Obey them that have the rule over you, καὶ ὑπείκετε,—'submit yourselves' (viz. to their order and discipline) because they watch for your souls, as they that must give accounts of them, that they may do it with joy." I am sure we cannot give accounts of souls of which we have no notice: and though we had reason to rescue them from the yoke of bondage, which the unjust laws and fetters of annual and private confession (as it was by them ordered) did make men to complain of; yet I believe we should be all unwilling our charges should exchange these fetters for worse, and by shaking off the laws of confession, accidentally entertain the tyranny of sin. It was neither fit that all should be tied to it, nor yet that all should throw it off. There are some sins, and some cases, and some persons, to whom an actual ministry, and personal provision and conduct, by the priest's office, were better than food or physic. It were, therefore, very well if great sinners could be invited to bear the yoke of holy discipline, and do their repentances under the conduct of those who must give an account of them, that they would inquire into the state of their souls, that they would submit them to be judged by those who are justly and rightly appointed over them, or such whom they are permitted to choose; and then that we would apply ourselves to understand the secrets of religion, the measures of the Spirit, the conduct of souls, the advantages and disadvantages of things and persons, the ways of life and death, the labyrinths of temptation, and all the remedies of sin, the public and private, the great and little, lines of conscience, and all those ways by which men may be assisted and promoted in the ways of godliness: for such knowledge as it is most difficult and secret, untaught and unregarded, so it is most necessary; and for want of it the holy sacrament of the eucharist is oftentimes given to them that are in the

[s] Heb. xiii. 17.

gall of bitterness: that which is holy, is given to dogs. Indeed, neither we nor our forefathers could help it always; and the discipline of the Church could seize but upon few: all were invited, but none but the willing could receive the benefit; but however, it were pity that men, upon the account of little and trifling objections, should be discouraged from doing themselves benefit, and from enabling us with greater advantages to do our duty to them. It was of old observed of the Christians; Πείθονται τοῖς ὡρισμένοις, καὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις βίοις νικῶσι τοὺς νόμους·—"They obey the laws, and by the excellence of their own lives excel the perfection of the laws:" and it is not well, if we shall be earnest to tell them that such a thing is not necessary, if we know it to be good. For in this present dissolution of manners, to tell the people concerning any good thing, that it is not necessary, is to tempt them to let it alone.

The presbyterian ministers (who are of the Church of England, just as the Irish are English) have obtained such power with their proselytes, that they take some account of the souls (of such as they please) before they admit them to their communion in sacraments; they do it to secure them to their party, or else make such accounts to be as their Shibboleth, to discern their Jews from the men of Ephraim: but it were very well we would do that for conscience, for charity, and for piety, which others do for interest or zeal; and that we would be careful to use all those ministries, and be earnest for all those doctrines, which visibly in the causes of things are apt to produce holiness and severe living. It is no matter whether by these arts any sect or name be promoted; it is certain Christian religion would, and that is the real interest of us all, that those who are under our charges should know the force of the resurrection of Christ, and the conduct of the Spirit, and live according to the purity of God, and the light of the Gospel. To this let us co-operate with all wisdom, and earnestness, and knowledge, and spiritual understanding. And there is no better way in the world to do this, than by ministering to persons singly in the conduct of their repentance; which, as it is the work of every man, so there are but few persons who need not the conduct of a spiritual guide in the beginnings and progressions of it.

To the assistance of this work I have now put my symbol,

having, by the sad experience of my own miseries and the calamities of others, to whose restitution I have been called to minister, been taught something of the secret of souls: and I have reason to think that the words of our dearest Lord to St. Peter were also spoken to me; "Tu autem conversus confirma fratres." I hope I have received many of the mercies of a repenting sinner, and I have felt the turnings and varieties of spiritual intercourses; and I have often observed the advantages in ministering to others, and am most confident that the greatest benefits of our office may, with best effect, be communicated to souls in personal and particular ministrations. In the following book I have given advices, and have asserted many truths in order to all this: I have endeavoured to break in pieces almost all those propositions, upon the confidence of which men have been negligent of severe and strict living: I have cancelled some false grounds upon which many answers in moral theology used to be made to inquiries in cases of conscience: I have, according to my weak ability, described all the necessities, and great inducements of a holy life; and have endeavoured to do it so plainly, that it may be useful to every man, and so inoffensively, that it may hurt no man.

I know but one objection which I am likely to meet withal (excepting those of my infirmity and disability, which I cannot answer but by protesting the piety of my purposes) but this only, that in the chapter of original sin, I speak otherwise than is spoken commonly in the Church of England: whose ninth article affirms, that the natural propensity to evil, and the perpetual lusting of the flesh against the spirit, deserves the anger of God and damnation; against which I so earnestly seem to dispute in the sixth chapter of my book. To this I answer, that it is one thing to say a thing in its own nature deserves damnation; and another to say, it is damnable to all those persons in whom it is subjected. The thing itself, that is, our corrupted nature, or our nature of corruption, does leave us in the state of separation from God, by being unable to bear us to heaven: imperfection of nature can never carry us to the perfections of glory; and this I conceive to be all that our Church intends: for that in the state of nature we can only fall short of heaven, and be condemned to a 'pœna damni,' is the severest thing that

any sober person owns; and this I say, that nature alone cannot bring us to God; without the regeneration of the Spirit, and the grace of God, we can never go to heaven: but because this nature was not spoiled by infants, but by persons of reason, and we are all admitted to a new covenant of mercy and grace, made with Adam presently after his fall, that is, even before we were born, as much as we were to a participation of sin before we were born, no man can perish actually for that, because he is reconciled by this. He that says, every sin is damnable, and deserves the anger of God, says true; but yet some persons that sin of mere infirmity, are accounted by God in the rank of innocent persons. So it is in this article. Concupiscence remains in the regenerate, and yet concupiscence hath the nature of sin, but it brings not condemnation. These words explain the former. Original imperfection is such a thing as is even in the regenerate; and it is of the nature of sin, that is, it is the effect of one sin, and the cause of many; but yet it is not damning, because as it is subjected in unconsenting persons, it loses its own natural venom, and relation to guiltiness, that is, it may of itself in its abstracted nature be a sin, and deserve God's anger, viz. in some persons, in all them that consent to it: but that which will always be in persons that shall never be damned, that is, in infants and regenerate, shall never damn them. And this is the main of what I affirm. And since the Church of England intended that article against the doctrine of the Pelagians, I suppose I shall not be thought to recede from the spirit and sense of the article, though I use differing manners of expression; because my way of explicating this question does most of all destroy the Pelagian heresy, since although I am desirous to acquit the dispensation of God and his justice from any imputation or suspicion of wrong, and am loath to put our sins upon the account of another, yet I impute all our evils to the imperfections of our nature and the malice of our choice, which does most of all demonstrate, not only the necessity of grace, but also of infant-baptism; and then to accuse this doctrine of Pelagianism, or any newer name of heresy, will seem like impotence and weakness of spirit; but there will be nothing of truth or learning in it. And although this article was penned according to the style of the schools, as they then did love to

speak, yet the hardest word in it is capable of such a sense as complies with the intendment of that whole sixth chapter. For though the Church of England professes herself fallible, and consequently, that all her truths may be peaceably improved; yet I do think that she is not actually deceived; and also, that divers eminently learned do consent in my sense of that article. However, I am so truly zealous for her honour and peace, that I wholly submit all that I say there, or any where else, to her most prudent judgment. And though I may most easily be deceived, yet I have given my reasons for what I say, and desire to be tried by them, not by prejudice, and numbers, and zeal: and if any man resolves to understand the article in any other sense than what I have now explicated, all that I shall say is, that it may be I cannot reconcile my doctrine to his explication; it is enough that it is consistent with the article itself in its best understanding and compliance with the truth itself, and the justification of God. However, he that explicates the article, and thinks it means as he says, does all the honour he can to the authority; whose words if he does not understand, yet the sanction he reveres.

And this liberty I now take, is no other than hath been used by the severest votaries in that Church where to dissent is death, I mean, in the Church of Rome. I call to witness those disputations and contradictory assertions in the matter of some articles, which are to be observed in Andreas Vega, Dominicus à Soto Andradius, the lawyers about the question of divorces, and clandestine contracts, the divines about predetermination, and about this very article of original sin, as relating to the Virgin Mary. But blessed be God, we are under the discipline of a prudent, charitable, and indulgent mother; and if I may be allowed to suppose that the article means no more in short, than the office of baptism explicates at large, I will abide by the trial, there is not a word in the rubric or prayers, but may very perfectly consist with the doctrine I deliver. But though the Church of England is my mother, and I hope I shall ever live, and at last die, in her communion, and if God shall call me to it, and enable me, I will not refuse to die for her; yet I conceive there is something most highly considerable in that saying, "Call no man master upon earth:" that is, no man's explication of her

articles shall prejudice my affirmative, if it agreeswith Scripture, and right reason, and the doctrine of the Primitive Church for the first three hundred years; and if in any of this I am mistaken, I will most thankfully be reproved, and most readily make honourable amends. But my proposition, I hope, is not built upon the sand: and I am most sure it is so zealous for God's honour, and the reputation of his justice, and wisdom, and goodness, that I hope all that are pious (unless they labour under some prejudice and prepossession) will upon that account be zealous for it, or at least confess, that what I intend hath in it more of piety than their negative can have of certainty. That which is strained and held too hard will soonest break. He that stoops to the authority, yet twists the article with truth, preserves both with modesty and religion.

One thing more I fear will trouble some persons, who will be apt to say to me, as Avitus of Vienna did to Faustus of Rhegium; "Hic, quantum ad frontem pertinet, quasi abstinentissimam vitam professus, et non secretam crucem, sed publicam vanitatem," &c. That upon pretence of great severity, as if I were exact or could be, I urge others to so great strictness, which will rather produce despair than holiness. Though I have in its proper place taken care concerning this, and all the way intend to rescue men from the just causes and inlets to despair; that is, not to make them do that, against which, by preaching a holy life, I have prepared the best defensative; yet this I shall say here particularly, that I think this objection is but a mere excuse which some men would make, lest they should believe it necessary to live well. For to speak truth, men are not very apt to despair, they have ten thousand ways to flatter themselves, and they will hope in despite of all arguments to the contrary; in all the Scripture there is but one example of a despairing man, and that was Judas, who did so, not upon the stock of any fierce propositions preached to him, but upon the load of his foul sin, and the pusillanimity of his spirit. But they are not to be numbered who live in sin, and yet "sibi suaviter benedicunt," think themselves in a good condition; and all they that rely upon those false principles which I have reckoned in this preface, and confuted in the book, are examples of it. But it were well if men would distinguish the sin of despair

from the misery of despair. Where God hath given us no warrant to hope, there to despair is no sin; it may be a punishment, and to hope also may be presumption.

I shall here end with the most charitable advice I can give to any of my erring brethren. Let no man be so vain as to use all the wit and arts, all the shifts and devices, of the world, that he may be bold to enjoy the pleasure of his sin, since it may bring him into that condition that it will be disputed whether he shall despair or no. Our duty is to make our calling and election sure; which certainly cannot be done but by a timely and effective repentance. But they that will be confident in their health, are sometimes pusillanimous in their sickness, presumptuous in sin, and despairing in the day of their calamity. "Cognitio de incorrupto Dei judicio in multis dormit; sed excitari solet circa mortem," said Plato.[h] For though men give false sentences of the Divine judgments, when their temptations are high, and their sin is pleasant, yet 'about the time of their death, their understanding and notices are awakened,' and they see what they would not see before, and what they cannot now avoid.

Thus I have given account of the design of this book to you, most reverend fathers and religious brethren of this church; and to your judgment I submit what I have here discoursed of; as knowing that the chiefest part of the ecclesiastical office is conversant about repentance; and the whole government of the Primitive Church was almost wholly employed in ministering to the orders, and restitution and reconciliation of penitents; and therefore you are not only by your ability, but by your employment and experiences, the most competent judges, and the aptest promoters, of those truths, by which repentance is made most perfect and irreprovable. By your prayers, and your authority, and your wisdom, I hope it will be more and more effected, that the strictnesses of a holy life be thought necessary, and that repentance may be no more that trifling little piece of duty, to which the errors of the late schools of learning, and the desires of men to be deceived in this article, have reduced it. I have done thus much of my part toward it, and I humbly desire it may be accepted by God, by you, and by all good men.

JER. TAYLOR.

[h] De Repub. i.

THE

DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

OF

REPENTANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOUNDATION AND NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE.

SECTION I.

Of the indispensable Necessity of Repentance in Remedy to the unavoidable transgressing the Covenant of Works.

In the first intercourse with man, God made such a covenant as he might justly make out of his absolute dominion, and such as was agreeable with those powers which he gave us, and the instances in which obedience was demanded. For, 1. Man was made perfect in his kind, and God demanded of him perfect obedience. 2. The first covenant was 'the covenant of works;' that is, there was nothing in it, but man was to obey or die: but God laid but one command upon him, that we find; the covenant was instanced but in one precept. In that he failed, and therefore he was lost. There was here no remedy, no second thoughts, no amends to be made. But because much was not required of him, and the commandment was very easy, and he had strengths more than enough to keep it,—and therefore he had no cause to complain: God might, and did, exact at first the covenant of works; because it was, at first, infinitely tolerable. But,

2. From this time forward this covenant began to be hard, and, by degrees, became impossible; not only because man's fortune was broken, and his spirit troubled, and his passions disordered and vexed by his calamity and his sin,—

but because man, upon the birth of children and the increase of the world, contracted new relations, and consequently had new duties and obligations; and men hindered one another, and their faculties, by many means, became disordered, and lessened in their abilities; and their will becoming perverse, they first were unwilling, and then unable, by superinducing dispositions and habits, contrary to their duty. However, because there was a necessity that man should be tied to more duty, God did, in the several periods of the world, multiply commandments, first to Noah, then to Abraham, and then to his posterity; and by this time they were very many: and still God held over man's head the covenant of works.

3. Upon the pressure of this covenant all the world did complain, "tanta mandata sunt, ut impossibile sit servari ea," said St. Ambrose: "the commandments were so many and great, that it was impossible they should be kept."[i] For, at first, there were no promises at all of any good, nothing but a threatening of evil to the transgressors; and after a long time they were entertained but with the promise of temporal good things, which to some men were performed by the pleasures and rewards of sin; and then there being a great imperfection in the nature of man, it could not be that man should remain innocent; and for repentance, in this covenant there was no regard or provisions made. But I said,

4. The covenant of works was still kept on foot;—how justly, will appear in the sequel: but the reasonableness of it was in this, that men, living in a state of awfulness, might be under a pedagogy, or severe institution, restraining their loosenesses, recollecting their inadvertencies, uniting their distractions. For the world was not then prepared by spiritual usages and dispositions to be governed by love and an easy yoke, but by threatenings and severities. And this is the account St. Paul gives of it, ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς,—"the law was a schoolmaster;"[k] that is, had a temporary authority serving to other ends, with no final concluding power. It could chastise and threaten, but it could not condemn: it had not power of eternal life and death; that was given by other measures. But because the world was wild and bar-

[i] In cap. iii. Gal. [k] Gal. iii. 24.

barous, good men were few, the bad potent and innumerable, and sin was conducted and helped forward by pleasure and impunity,—it was necessary that God should superinduce a law, and shew them the rod, and affright and check their confidences, lest the world itself should perish by dissolution. The law of Moses was still a part of the covenant of works. Some little it had of repentance: sacrifice and expiations were appointed for small sins; but nothing at all for greater. Every great sin brought death infallibly. And as it had a little image of repentance, so it had something of promises, to be as a grace and auxiliary to set forward obedience. But this would not do it. The promises were temporal, and that could not secure obedience in great instances; and there being for them no remedy appointed by repentance, the law could not justify; it did not promise life eternal, nor give sufficient security against the temporal; only it was brought in as a pedagogy for the present necessity.

5. But this pedagogy, or institution, was also a manuduction to the Gospel. For they were used to severe laws, that they might the more readily entertain the holy precepts of the Gospel, to which eternally they would have shut their ears, unless they had had some preparatory institution of severity and fear: and, therefore, St. Paul also calls it, παιδαγωγίαν εἰς Χριστὸν,—"a pedagogy," or institution, leading "unto Christ."

6. For it was this which made the world of the godly long for Christ, as having commission to open the κρυπτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων,—'the hidden mystery' of justification by faith and repentance. For the law called for exact obedience, but ministered no grace but that of fear, which was not enough to the performance or the engagement of exact obedience. All, therefore, were here convinced of sin; but by this covenant they had no hopes, and, therefore, were to expect relief from another and a better: according to that saying of St. Paul, "The Scripture concludes all under sin (that is, declares all the world to be sinners), that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."[1] This St. Bernard expresses in these words; "Deus nobis hoc fecit, ut nostram imperfectionem ostenderet, et

[1] Gal. iii. 22.

Christi avidiores nos faceret: — Our imperfection was sufficiently manifest by the severity of the first covenant, that the world might long for salvation by Jesus Christ."

7. For since mankind could not be saved by the covenant of works, that is, of exact obedience, they must perish for ever; or else hope to be saved by a covenant of ease and remission, that is, such a covenant as may secure man's duty to God, and God's mercy to man: and this is the covenant which God made with mankind in Christ Jesus, the covenant of repentance.

8. This covenant began immediately after Adam's fall. For as soon as the first covenant, the covenant of works, was broken, God promised to make it up by an instrument of mercy, which himself would find out. 'The Seed of the woman' should make up the breaches of the man. But this should be acted and published in its own time, not presently. In the meantime, man was, by virtue of that new covenant or promise, admitted to repentance.

9. Adam confessed his sin and repented. Three hundred years together did he mourn upon the mountains of India; and God promised him a Saviour, by whose obedience his repentance should be accepted. And when God did threaten the old world with a flood of waters, he called upon them to repent; but because they did not, God brought upon them the flood of waters. For one hundred and twenty years together, he called upon them to return, before he would strike his final blow. Ten times God tried Pharaoh, before he destroyed him. And in all ages, in all periods, and with all men, God did deal by this measure; and (excepting that God in some great cases, or in the beginning of a sanction, to establish it with the terror of a great example) he scarce ever destroyed a single man with temporal death for any nicety of the law, but for long and great prevarications of it: and when he did otherwise, he did it after the man had been highly warned of the particular, and could have obeyed easily; which was the case of the man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath; and was like the case of Adam, who was upon the same account judged by the covenant of works.

10. This, then, was an emanation both of God's justice

and his mercy. Until man had sinned, he was not the subject of mercy: and if he had not then received mercy, the infliction had been too severe and unjust; since the covenant was beyond the measures of man, after it began to multiply into particular laws, and man by accident was lessened in his strengths.

11. From hence the corollaries are plain, I. God was not unjust for beginning his intercourse with mankind by the covenant of works, for these reasons:

(1.) Because man had strengths enough to do it, until he lessened his own abilities.

(2.) The covenant of works was, at first, instanced but in a small commandment: in abstaining from the fruit of one tree, when he had by him very many others for his use and pleasure.

(3.) It was necessary that the covenant of works should begin: for the covenant of faith and repentance could not be at first; there was no need of it, no opportunity for it, it must suppose a defailance, or an infirmity, as physic supposes sickness and mortality.

(4.) God never exacted the obedience of man by strict measures, by the severity of the first covenant after Adam's fall; but men were saved then as now; they were admitted to repentance, and justified by faith and the works of faith. And, therefore, the Jews say that three things were before the world,—the law, the name of the Messias, and repentance; that is, as St. Paul better expresses it, This repentance, through faith in the Messias, is "the hidden wisdom of God, ordained before the world unto our glory."[m] So that, at first, it was not impossible; and when it was, it was not exacted in the impossible measure; but it was kept in pretence and overture for ends of piety, wisdom, and mercy, of which I have given account; it was σοφία ἀποκεκρυμμένη,—'a wise dispensation,' but it was 'hidden.'

12. For since it is essential to a law, that it be in a matter that is possible, it cannot be supposed that God would judge man by an impossible commandment.[n] A good man would not do it, much less the righteous and merciful Judge

[m] 1 Cor. ii. 7.

[n] Plato, lib. v. de Leg. Demosth. contra Timocratem. Plutar. in Solon. Curius Fortunatianus Rhet. Nemo obligatur ad impossibile.

of men and angels. But God, by holding over the world the covenant of works, "non fecit prævaricatores sed humiles;—did not make us sinners" by not observing the ἀκρίβεια, the minutes and tittles of the law, "but made us humble," needing mercy, begging grace, longing for a Saviour, relying upon a better covenant, waiting for better promises, praying for the Spirit of grace, repenting of our sins, deploring our infirmities, and justified by faith in the promises of God.

13. II. This, then, is the great introduction and necessity of repentance. We neither could have lived without it, nor have understood the way of the Divine justice, nor have felt any thing of his most glorious attribute. But the admission of us to repentance is the great verification of his justice, and the most excellent expression of his mercy: this is the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, springing from the fountains of grace, purchased by the blood of the holy Lamb, the eternal sacrifice, promised from the beginning, always ministered to man's need in the secret economy of God, but proclaimed to all the world at the revelation of God incarnate, the first day of our Lord Jesus.

14. But what are we eased now under the Gospel, which is a law of greater holiness and more commandments, and a sublimer purity, in which we are tied to more severity than ever man was bound to, under any institution and covenant? If the law was an impossible commandment, who can say he hath strictly and punctually performed the injunctions of the Gospel? Is not the little finger of the Son, heavier than the Father's loins? Here therefore it is to be inquired, Whether the commandments of Jesus Christ be as impossible to be kept as the law of Moses? If we by Christ be tied to more holiness than the sons of Israel were by Moses's law, then because that could not be kept, then neither can this. But if we be not tied to more than they, how is the law of Christ a more perfect institution? and how can we now be justified by a law, no better than that by which we could not be justified? But then, if this should be as impossible as ever, why is it anew imposed? why is it held over us, when the ends for which it was held over us, now are served? And at last, how can it be agreeable to God's wisdom and justice, to exact of us a law which we cannot perform, or to impose a

law which cannot justly be exacted? The answering and explicating this difficulty, will serve many propositions in the doctrine of repentance.

SECTION II.

Of the Possibility or Impossibility of keeping the Precepts of the Gospel.

15. It were strange that it should be possible for all men to keep the commandments, and required and exacted of all men with the intermination or threatening of horrid pains, and yet that no man should ever do it. St. Jerome brings in Atticus thus arguing: "Da exemplum, aut confitere imbecillitatem tuam;"[o] and the same also was the argument of Orosius; and the reasonableness of it is a great prejudice against the contrary affirmation of St. Austin, Alipius et Evodias, Aurelius et Possidius, who,—because it is no good consequence to argue 'a non esse ad non posse,' and though it is not done, yet possibly it might; conclude, that it is possible to keep the commandments; though as yet no man ever did, but He that did it for us all. But as Marcellinus said well, 'It is hard to say, that by a man a thing can be done, of which although there was a great necessity and a severe commandment, yet there never was any example.'—Because in men there is such infinite variety of tempers, dispositions, apprehensions, designs, fears and hopes, purposes and interests, that it were next to a miracle that not one of all mankind should do what he can, and what so highly concerns him. But because this, although it be a high probability, yet is no certain demonstration; that which St. Paul[p] taught is certainly to be relied upon, "that the law could not do it for us," that is, could not bring us justification, "in that it was weak through the flesh;" meaning, that because we were so weak we could not fulfil the righteousness of the law, therefore we could not be justified by that covenant. "Mosi manus graves, facies cornuta, impedita lingua, lapideæ tabulæ:—Moses's hands were heavy, his face bright, his tongue stammering, and the tables were of stone;" by which is meant, that the imposition and the burden were great, but the

[o] Lib. i. Dial. adv. Pelag. [p] Rom. viii. 3.

shoulder is weak and crushed, and therefore was not able to bear it; and therefore much less can it stand under a bigger load, if the holy precepts of the Gospel should prove so, and we be assisted by no firmer supporters.

16. For the nature and constitution of man are such, that he cannot perpetually attend to any state of things: "Voluntas per momenta variatur, quia solus Deus immutabilis;"[q] Variety and change, inconstancy and repentance, are in his very nature. If he be negligent, he is soon tempted. If he be watchful, he is soon wearied. If he be not instructed, he is exposed to every abuse. If he be, yet he is ignorant of more than he knows, and may be cozened by very many things; and in what he knows or seems to know, he is sometimes confident, sometimes capricious, curious and impertinent, proud and contemptuous. The commandments are instanced in things against our natural inclinations, and are restraints upon our appetite; and although a man may do it in single instances, yet to act a part of perpetual violence and preternatural contentions, is too hard and severe an expectation, and the often unavoidable failings of men will shew how impossible it is. It is, as St. Jerome's expression is, as if a man should hale a boat against the stream; if ever he slacken his hand, the vessel falls back; and if ever we give way to our appetite in any of the forbidden instances, we descend naturally and easily. Some vices are proportionable to a man's temper, and there he falls pleasantly and with desire; Ἡδὺ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ δὲ βίαιον λυπηρὸν, said Aristotle;—"That which is natural is sweet, but that which is violent is troublesome:"[r] to others he is indifferent, but to them he is turned by every bias. If a man be morose, he is apt to offend with sullenness and angry pretensions: but if he be compliant and gentle, he is easily cozened with fair entreaties. If he be alone, he is sad and fantastic, and 'wo to him that is alone:' if he be in company, it will be very hard for him to go with them to the utmost limits of permission, and not to step beyond it. No man's leisure is great enough to attend the inquiry after all the actions and particulars, for which he is to be judged; and he does many things, which he considers not whether they be sins or no; and when he does consider, he often judges wrong. For some things there are

[q] St. Jerom. lib. ii. in Gal. c. iii.

[r] Rhet. lib. i. Holwell. p. 50.

no certain measures; and there are very many constituent or intervening things and circumstances of things, by which it is made impossible to give a certain judgment of the whole. Oftentimes a man is surprised and cannot deliberate for want of time; sometimes he is amazed, and wants order and distinction to his thoughts, and cannot deliberate for want of powers. Sometimes the case is such, that if a man determines it against his temporal interest, he determines falsely, and yet he thinks he does it safest; and if he judges in compliance with his temporal regards, he cannot be confident but that he was moved, not by the prevailing reason, but by prevailing passion. If the dispute be concerning degrees, there is no certain measure to weigh them by: and yet sometimes a degree does diversify the kind, and virtue and vice are but differing degrees of the same instance: and the ways of sinning upon the stock of ignorance are as many as there are ignorances, and degrees, and parts, and vicious causes, and instances of it.

17. Concerning our infirmities, they are so many that we can no more account concerning the ways of error coming upon that stock, than it can be reckoned in how many places a lame man may stumble, that goes a long journey in difficult and uneven ways. We have beginning infant-strengths, 'which are therefore imperfect because they can grow:' "Crescere posse imperfectæ rei signum est;"[s] and when they are most confirmed and full grown, they are imperfect still. When we can reckon all the things of chance, then we have summed up the dangers and aptnesses of man to sin upon that one principle; but so as they can, they are summed up in the words of Epiphanius;[t] Οὐκ ἀναιροῦμεν τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν, εἰδότες τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ δεσπότου, καὶ τὸ συγγνωστὸν τῆς φύσεως, τὸ εὐρισκόμενον τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸ ἀσθενὲς τῆς σαρκὸς, τὸ πολύβλυστον τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων αἰσθήσεως. — "The condition of our nature, the inconstancy of our spirits, the infirmity of our flesh, the distraction of our senses, are an argument to make us with confidence expect pardon and mercy from the loving-kindness of the Lord, according to the preaching of truth, the Gospel of Christ."

18. But besides all this, the numbers of sin are not easily

[s] Seneca, Ep. 67. [t] Hæres. 59.

to be told: the lines of account are various and changeable, our opinions uncertain, and we are affrighted from one into another, and all changes from sin are not into virtue, but more commonly into sin. "Obsessa mens hominis et undique diaboli infestatione vallata vix occurrit singulis, vix resistit; si avaritia prostrata est, exsurgit libido."[u] And if we do not commit things forbidden, yet the sins of omission are innumerable and undiscernible. Businesses intervene, and visits are made, and civilities to be rendered, and friendly compliances to be entertained, and necessities to be served, and some things thought so which are not so,—and so the time goes away, and the duty is left undone; prayers are hindered, and prayers are omitted; and concerning every part of time which was once in our power, no man living can give a fair account.

19. This moral demonstration of the impossibility of perfect and exact obedience and innocence, would grow too high, if I should tell how easily our duties are soured even when we think we walk wisely. Severity is quickly turned into ungentleness, love of children to indulgence, joy to gaiety, melancholy to peevishness, love of our wives to fondness, liberties of marriage to licentiousness, devotion to superstition, austerity to pride, feasting to intemperance, urbanity to foolish jesting, a free speech into impertinence and idle talking.

20. There were no bottom of this consideration, if we consider how all mankind sins with the tongue. "He that offends not in his tongue, he is a perfect man indeed:" but experience and the following considerations do manifest, that no man is so perfect. For,

21. Every passion of the soul is a spring and a shower, a parent and a nurse to sin. Our passions either mistake their objects or grow intemperate; either they put too much upon a trifle, or too little upon the biggest interest. They are material and sensual, best pleased and best acquainted with their own objects: and we are to do some things, which it is hard to be told how they can be in our own power. We are commanded to be angry, to love, to hope, to desire certain things, towards which we cannot be so affected ever when we please. A man cannot love or hate upon the stock and interest of a

[u] Zabuli. St. Cypr. de Oper. et Eleemos.

commandment, and yet these are parts of our duty. To mourn and to be sorrowful are natural effects of their proper apprehensions, and therefore are not properly capable of a law. Though it be possible for a man who is of a sanguine complexion, in perfect health and constitution, not to act his lust; yet it will be found next to impossible not to love it, not to desire it: and who will find it possible that every man, and in all cases of his temptation, should overcome his fear? But if this fear be instanced in a matter of religion, it will be apt to multiply eternal scruples; and they are equivocal effects of a good meaning, but are proper and univocal enemies to piety and a wise religion.

22. I need not take notice of the infinite variety of thoughts and sentences, that divide all mankind concerning their manner of pleasing and obeying God; and the appendant zeal by which they are furiously driven on to promote their errors or opinions, as they think, for God; and he that shall tell these men they do amiss, would be wondered at; for they think themselves secure of a good reward, even when they do horrible things. But the danger here is very great, when the instrument of serving God is nothing but opinion and passion abused by interest; especially since this passion of itself is very much to be suspected; it being temerity or rashness (for some zeal is no better); and its very formality is inadvertency and inconsideration.

23. But the case is very often so, that even the greatest consideration is apt to be mistaken: and how shall men be innocent, when besides the signal precepts of the Gospel, there are propounded to us some general measures, and as I may call them 'extraregular lines,' by which our actions are to be directed; such as are, the analogy of faith, fame, reputation, public honesty, not giving offence, being exemplary; all which, and divers others being indefinite measures of good and evil, are pursued as men please, and as they will understand them. And because concerning these, God alone can judge righteously, he alone can tell when we have observed them: we cannot; and therefore it is certain we very often do mistake.

24. Hence it is that they who mean holiness and purity, are forced to make to themselves rules and measures by way of idea or instrument, endeavouring to choose that side which

is the surest; which indeed is but a guessing at the way we should walk in; and yet by this way also men do often run into a snare, and lay trouble and intricacy upon their consciences, unnecessary burdens which presently they grow weary of; and in striving to shake them off, they gall the neck, and introduce tediousness of spirit, or despair.

25. For we see when religion grows high, the dangers do increase, not only by the proper dangers of that state, and the more violent assaults made against saints than against meaner persons of no religious interest; but because it will be impossible for any man to know certainly what intension of spirit is the 'minimum religionis,' the necessary condition, under, or less than, which God will not accept the action: and yet sometimes two duties justle one another, and while we are zealous in one, we less attend the other, and therefore cannot easily be certain of our measures; and because sometimes two duties of a very different matter are to be reconciled and waited upon, who can tell what will be the event of it,—since man's nature is so limited and little, that it cannot at once attend upon two objects?

26. Is it possible that a man should so attend his prayers, that his mind should be always present and never wander? does not every man complain of this, and yet no man can help it? And if of this alone we had cause to complain, yet even for this we were not innocent in others; and "he that is an offender in one, is guilty of all;" and yet it is true that "in many things we all offend." And all this is true when a man is well and when he is wise; but he may be foolish and he will be sick; and there is a new scene of dangers, new duties, and new infirmities, and new questions, and the old uncertainty of things, and the same certainty of doing our duty weakly, and imperfectly, and pitiably.

——— Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te·
Conatus non pœniteat votique peracti?[x]

27. Since therefore every sin is forbidden, and yet it can enter from so many angles, I may conclude in the words of Sedulius;[y] "Lex spiritualis est, quia spiritualia mandat, ardua præcipit opera spiritus, prohibens peccata, et ideò non potest impleri:—God's law is spiritual, and we are carnal and disproportionate to it while we are in the state of conjunction,

[x] Juv. x. 5. [y] In cap. vii. Rom.

and therefore it cannot be kept."—"Deus jugum legis homini imponit, homo ferre non valet," said the fathers of the synod of Frankfort;—"God hath imposed a yoke, but man cannot bear it." For that I may sum up all,

28. In affirmative precepts the measure is,—To love God with all our faculties and degrees. In negative precepts the measure is,—Not to lust or desire. Now if any man can say that he can so love God in the proper and full measures, as never to step aside towards the creatures with whom he daily converses, and is of the same kindred with them, and that he can so abstain from the creature, as never to covet what he is forbidden; then indeed he justifies God in imposing a possible law, and condemns himself that he does not what he ought. But in all he infers the absolute necessity of repentance.

29. But because we are sure God is just and cannot be otherwise, all the doctors of the Church have endeavoured to tie these things together, and reconcile our state of infirmity with the justification of God. Many lay the whole fault upon man, not on the impossible imposition. But that being the question, cannot be concluded on either hand with a bare affirmative or negative; and besides, it was condemned by the African Councils to say that a man might, if he pleased, live without sin.

> Posse hominem sine peccato decurrere vitam,
> Si velit, ut potuit, nullo delinquere primus
> Libertate suâ: nempe hæc damnata fuêre
> Conciliis, mundique manu ——— said Prosper.[z]

For if it were only the fault of men, then a man might, if he pleased, keep the whole law, and then might be justified by the law, and should not need a Saviour. St. Austin[a] indeed thought it no great error, and some African bishops did expressly affirm, that some from their conversion did to the day of their death live without sin. This was worse than that of Pelagius, save only that these took in the grace of God, which (in that sense which the Church teaches) the Pelagians did not. But this also was affirmed by St. Austin;[b] upon which account it must follow that the commandments are therefore possible, because it is only our fault that they are not kept. But how to reconcile this opinion and saying of St. Austin

[z] Carm. de Ingratis, c. ix. [a] Epist. ad Innocent.
[b] Lib. ii. de Merit. et Remiss. c. 6; lib. de Spirit. et lit. c. 1.

and some other Africans, with the African Councils, with St. Jerome, Orosius, Lactantius, and with St. Austin himself,[c] and generally the whole ancient Church against the Pelagians, I cannot understand: but it is sufficiently confuted by all the foregoing considerations.

30. St. Jerome says, that the observation of the commandments is possible to the whole Church, but not to every single person: but then the difficulty remains. For the whole Church, being a collection of single persons, is not the subject of a law. Nothing is universal but names and words; a thing cannot be universal, it is a contradiction to say, it is. To say the Church can keep it, is to say that every man can keep it; to say, that every man of the Church cannot keep it, is to say that the whole Church cannot keep it: as he that says, *mankind* is reasonable, says that *every man* is; but he that says, *every man* is not just, says that *all mankind* is not just. But if it contains in it another sense, it is a dangerous affirmative, which I shall represent in his own words: "Ita fit ut quod in alio aut primum aut totum est, in alio ex parte versetur, et tamen non sit in crimine qui non habet omnia, nec condemnetur ex eo quod non habet, sed justificetur ex eo quod possidet."[d] I will not be so severe as St. Austin, who in his nineteenth sermon "de Tempore," calls it "blasphemy." It is indeed a hard saying, if he means that a man can be justified by some virtues, though he retains some vices: "for he that sins in one, is guilty of all."—But yet some persons shall be crowned, who never converted souls; and some, that never redeemed captives; and millions that never sold all and gave to the poor: and there are many graces, of which some lives have no opportunities. The state of marriage hath some graces proper to itself; and the calling of a merchant, and the office of a judge, and the employment of an advocate hath some things of virtue which others do not exercise, and they also have their proper graces: and in this sense it is true what St. Jerome says, that he that hath not all, may be justified by what he hath, and not sentenced for what he hath not; it not being imputed to him that he hath not that of which he hath no use. Now although this be true, yet it is not sufficient to explicate the question: for the commandments are not only

[c] Serm. 49. de Tempore. [d] Lib. i. Dial. adv. Pelag.

impossible in this sense; but even in that where the sense of his duty does lie, and where his graces ought to have been exercised, every man is a sinner, every man hath failed in his proper duty and calling. So that now to say the commandments are possible to the whole Church, and not to every single person, is to divide the duty of a Christian, and to give to every one a portion of duty, which must leave in every one a portion of impiety; and to say that this is keeping the commandments, or a sufficient means of justification, is that which St. Austin called blasphemy.

31. But St. Jerome hath another answer: "Hoc et nos dicimus, posse hominem non peccare, si velit, pro tempore, pro loco, pro imbecillitate corporea, quamdiu intentus est animus, quamdiu chorda nullo vitio laxatur in cithara;"[e]—God hath not imposed an impossible law. For there is no commandment, but a man that considers, that endeavours, that understands, that watches, that labours, may do in time and place; and so long as he adverts, and is dispassionate, so long his instrument is in tune:" which answer is like that saying of the schools, that there is no difficulty in things, but every thing is easy to be understood, but that we find difficulty, is because of the weakness of the understanding; that is, things are easy to be understood, if we were wise enough to understand them: but because our understanding is weak, therefore things are hard; for to be intelligible is a relative term; and it is not sense to say that a thing is in itself easy to be understood, but hard to the understanding; for it is as if it were said, it is easy, but that it is hard; and that is the thing which, in this question, is complained of on all hands. For an oak is easy to be pulled up by the roots, if a man had strength enough to do it; but if this be imposed upon a weak man or a child, they have reason to complain: and a bushel or two of wheat is no great thing to carry, but it is too great for me, I cannot do it. So by this account of St. Jerome, the commandments are not impossible, for there is not any one of them but any man can do at some time, while he considers and is in perfect disposition. But then we are to remember, that the commandments are always imposed, and we are not always in that condition of good things to be wise and watchful, well disposed, and well

[e] Dial. extr. adv. Pelag. lib. iii.

resolved, standing upon our guard, and doing what we can at other times; and therefore it is that the commandments are impossible. So that still the difficulty remains, and the inquiry must go on, how we are to understand the Divine justice in exacting an impossible law? or if he does not exact it, how we understand the way of the Divine wisdom in imposing that law which he cannot justly exact?

32. To the first I answer, that God doth not exact of us what is not possible to be done. The highest severity of the Gospel is, 'to love God with all our soul,' that is, to love him as much as we can love him; and that is certain we can do. Every man can do as much as he can, and God requires no more: and even those things which we can do, though he calls upon us to do the most, yet he punishes us not if we do it heartily and sincerely, though with less passion and exactness. Now, as God's justice was secured in the imposition of the law of Moses, because whatever severity was held over them to restrain their loosenesses, yet God exacted it only by the measures of a man, and healed all their breaches by the medicine of repentance: so now, in the Gospel, he hath done it much more γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ, God hath taken the veil off, and professed it openly, he hath included this mercy in the very constitution of the covenant. For the Gospel is the covenant of repentance: we shall not have leave to sin, but we shall have leave to repent, if we have sinned: so that God hath imposed a law of perfection, but he exacts it according to the possibilities of imperfect persons; "Omnia mandata Dei facta deputantur, quando quicquid not fit, ignoscitur;—And then we have kept the commandments, when we have received our pardon for what we have not kept."[f]

33. II. As the law of Moses was not of itself impossible absolutely and naturally; so neither are the commandments of the Gospel. For if we consider the particulars of Moses's law, they were such a burden which the Jews themselves were loath to part withal; because it was, in the moral part of it, but a law of abstinence from evil; to which fear and temporal promises were, as they understood it, a sufficient endearment: but that burden, which neither "they nor their fathers were able to bear," was the sting of the law, that it allowed no repentance for great crimes, but the transgressor

[f] St. August. lib. i. Retract. c. 19.

should die "without mercy, under two or three witnesses."[g] Now, then, since in the Gospel there is no such thing, but there is an allowance of repentance,—this must needs be an easy yoke. This only is to be added, that the righteousness of the law was in abstinence from evil; the righteousness of the Gospel is in that, and in the doing all the affirmative commandments of Christ. Now this being a new obligation, brought also with it new abilities, I mean the glorious promises of the Gospel, which whosoever believes heartily, will find himself able to do or suffer any thing for the enjoying of them; and this is that which is taught us by St. Paul: "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son," made it possible by the Spirit of grace, and by our spiritual conversation.

34. III. There is a natural possibility, and a moral: there are abilities in every man to do any thing that is there commanded, and he that can do well to-day may do so to-morrow; in the nature of things this is true: and since every sin is a breach of a law, which a man might and ought to have kept, it is naturally certain, that whenever any man did break the commandment, he might have done otherwise. In man, therefore, speaking naturally and of the physical possibilities of things, there is, by those assistances which are given in the Gospel, ability to keep the commandments evangelical. But in the moral sense, that is, when we consider what man is, and what are his strengths, and how many his enemies, and how soon he falls, and that he forgets when he should remember, and his faculties are asleep when they should be awake, and he is hindered by intervening accidents, and weakened and determined by superinduced qualities, habits, and necessities,—the keeping of the commandments is morally impossible. Now that this may also be taken off, there is an abatement and an allowance made for this also. Our infirmities are pitied, our ignorances excused, our unavoidable errors not imputed. These in the law were imputable, and it was lawful for the avenger of blood to kill a manslayer who sinned against his will, if he could overtake him before he got to sanctuary. These, I say, in the law were imputable, but they were not imputed: God's mercy took them off privately upon the accounts of his mercy and

[g] Heb. x. 28. [h] Rom. viii. 3.

a general repentance: but in the Gospel they are neither imputed nor imputable: they were paid for beforehand, and put on the accounts of the cross: "God winked at the times of your ignorance;" and, "The Lord had pity on me, because I did it in ignorance," said St. Paul; and so Christ prayed; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—"But ye did it ignorantly, as did also your rulers;" so St. Peter, and upon that account he called them to accept of mercy. And it is certain in reason, that if God forgives those sins of malice of which we repent, infinitely rather will he not impute what we cannot probably or possibly avoid. For to do otherwise, were τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καὶ κοινῆς ἀσθενείας ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι· ἕως ἄν τις ἀναμαρτήτους κολάζῃ, τὸ μέτρον ὑπερβαίνει τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐπανορθώσεως:[i] it is a severity above the measures of human sufferance and capacity, to be punished for infirmities when they do not sin wilfully; and therefore God, who remembers and pities our infirmities, will never put these into his account, especially the holy Jesus having already paid our symbol. Upon the account of these particulars it is certain, God does not exact of us an impossible commandment; that is, not in the impossible measure: for that is the meaning of those words of St. Basil, ἀσεβὲς γὰρ λέγειν ἀδύνατα εἶναι τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος παραγγέλματα·—It is impious to say, the commandments of the Spirit," *i. e.* of the Gospel, "are impossible," viz. in that sense in which they are exacted.

But now to the second inquiry: since in justice God exacts not an impossible law, how does it consist with his wisdom to impose what, in justice, he does not exact? I answer, 1. That it was necessary the law, in its latitude and natural extension, should be given; for if, in the sanction, any limits and lessenings had been described, it had been a permission given to us to despise him in a certain degree, and could, in no sense, have been proportionable to his infinity. God commands us to "love him with all our hearts, and all our strengths;" that is, always and with all that we can: if less than this had been imposed, and we commanded to love God but to a less, and a certain proportion, besides that it would not have been possible for us to understand when we did what was commanded,—it would have been either a direct lessening our opinion of God, by tempting us to suppose no more love

[i] Apud Diodor. Sicul. [k] Hom. iii. inter. 19.

was due to him than such a limited measure; or else a teaching us not to give him what was his due; either of which must necessarily tend to God's dishonour.

36. II. The commanding us to do all that we can, and that always, though less be exacted, does invite our greatest endeavours; it entertains the faculties and labours of the best, and yet despises not the meanest; for they can endeavour too, and they can do their best: and it serves the end of many graces besides, and the honour of some of the Divine attributes.

37. III. By this means still we are contending and pressing forward; and no man can say he does now comprehend, or that his work is done, till he die; and therefore for ever he must grow in grace, which could not be without the proposing of a commandment, the performance of which would for ever sufficiently employ him: for by this means the commandments do every day grow more possible than at first. A lustful person thinks it impossible to mortify his lust: but when he hath long contended and got the mastery, it grows easy, and at last, in the progressions of a long piety, sin is more impossible[1] than duty is. "He that is born of God, sinneth not, neither indeed can he;" so St. John;—and, "through Christ, that strengthens me, I can do all things," saith St. Paul. It is long before a man comes to it, but the impossibility by degrees turns into a possibility, and that into an easiness, and at last into a necessity. It is a trouble for some to commit a sin. By this also we exercise a holy fear, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It enlarges our care, and endears our watchfulness and caution. It cures or prevents our pride and bold challenges of God for rewards which we never can deserve. It convinces us of the necessity of the Divine aid, and makes us to rely upon God's goodness in helping us, and his mercy in pardoning us; and truly, without this we could neither be so sensible of our infirmities, nor of the excellent gifts and mercies of God: for although God does not make necessities on purpose that he may serve them, or introduce sin that he might pardon it,—yet he loves we should depend upon him; and by these rare arts of the Divine economy

[1] In epistolâ ad Innocentium dictum est, multos catholicos viros dixisse posse hominem esse sine peccato per gratiam Dei, non à nativitate sed à conversione.

makes us to strive to be like him, and in the midst of our finite abilities, have infinite desires, that even so we may be disposed towards the holiness and glories of eternity.

38. IV. Although God exacts not an impossible law under eternal and insufferable pains, yet he imposes great holiness in unlimited and indefinite measures, with a design to give excellent proportions of reward answerable to the greatness of our endeavour. Hell is not the end of them, that fail in the greatest measures of perfection; but great degrees of heaven shall be their portion, who do all that they can always, and offend in the fewest instances. For as our duty is not limited, so neither are the degrees of glory: and if there were not this latitude of duty, neither could there be any difference in glory; neither could it be possible for all men to hope for heaven, but now all may: the meanest of God's servants shall go thither; and yet there are greater measures for the best and most excellent services.

39. Thus we may understand, that the imposing of the Divine laws, in all the periods of the world, was highly consistent with the Divine justice, and an excellent, infinite wisdom, and yet in the exacting them, mercy prevailed;—because the covenant of works or of exact obedience was never the rule of life and death, since the Saviour of the world was promised, that is, since the fall of Adam, but all mankind was admitted to repentance, and washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, and was slain from the beginning of it. Repentance was the measure of our duty, and the remedy for our evils; and the commandments were not impossible to him that might amend what was done amiss.

SECTION III.

How Repentance, and the Precept of Perfection evangelical, can stand together.

40. That the Gospel is a covenant of repentance, is evident in the whole design and nature of the thing, in the preparatory sermons made by the Baptist, by the apostles of our Lord, by the seventy-two disciples, and the exhortations

made by St. Peter at the first opening the commission, and the secret of the religion. Which doctrine of repentance, lest it should be thought to be a permission to sin, a leave to need the remedy, is charged with an addition of a strict and severe holiness, the precept of perfection. It therefore must be such a repentance as includes in it perfection, and yet the perfection is such as needs repentance. How these two are to stand together is the subject of the present inquiry. "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;"[m] that is the charge. To be perfect as God, and yet to repent as a man, seem contrary to each other. They seem so only. For,

41. I. It does not signify perfection of degrees in the natural sense of the word. For as Philo said well, Ἀψευδῶς αἱ τελειότητες καὶ ἀκρότητες ἑνός εἰσι μόνου,—"Perfections and the heights of excellences are only proper to one:"—Σοφὸς ὁ μόνος Θεὸς καὶ τέλειος μόνος, said Clemens of Alexandria;—"God alone is wise, he alone is perfect." All that we do is but little; and that little is imperfect, and that imperfection is such as could be condemned, if God did not use gentleness and mercy towards us. But,

42. II. Although perfection of degrees cannot be understood to be our duty in the periods and spaces of this life, because we are here in the state of labour and contention, of pilgrimage and progression, yet even in this life we are to labour towards it: and, "Be ye perfect," viz. with the highest degrees of holiness, is to be understood in a current and transient sense. For this precept, thus understood, hath its obligation upon our endeavour only, and not upon the event. When a general commands his army to destroy the enemy, he binds them only to a prudent, a possible, and vigorous endeavour to do it, and cannot intend the effect, but by several parts answerable to the steps of the progression. So is that in the Psalms; "Be learned, ye that are princes of the world;"[n] that is, Learn, and so by industry and attention arrive at knowledge. For although every man be a sinner, yet he that does not endeavour to avoid all sin, is not only guilty of the sin he commits,—but the negligence also, which is the parent of the sin, is another sin, and directly criminal. So it is in the degrees of perfection; what we cannot attain

[m] Matt. v. 48. [n] Psalm ii.

to, we must at least desire. In this world, we cannot arrive thither; but in this life we must always be going thither. It is 'status viæ;' grace is the way to glory. And as he that commands us to enter into a city from which we are hugely distant, means we should pass through all the ways that lead thither, so it is here. The precept must be given here, and begun, and set forward; and it will be finished hereafter. But as a man may be an adulterer, or a thief, with his heart and his eye, as well as with his hand; so it is also in good things: a man's heart may be in heaven, that is, in the state of perfection, long before he sets his feet upon the golden threshold. His desires are first crowned and sainted, and then the work shall be made perfect.

43. III. There is another sort of perfection, which may not be improperly meant in this charge of duty, and that is, a perfection of state. "Be ye perfect," that is, be ye holy; for τελετεύω is 'sanctifico;' and τελετὴ is 'festum,' or 'a holy day,' a day that hath the perfection added to it of which a day is capable, a day sanctified to the Lord. For τελειοῦν is the same with ἁγιάζειν, to 'sanctify' is to 'make perfect.' "Nihil enim sanctificavit lex," so the Latin reads the words of St. Paul;° but in the Greek it is ἐτελείωσεν,—'The law *made that perfect* which it did not sanctify.' So that, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," is, Be ye holy like him, or in imitation of him. And thus the word is expounded in Plato: Τέλος τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὸ ὁμοιωθῆναι τῷ Θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσιν δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι.—"That is the perfection of good, to be like God; but to be like him is to be just, and holy, and prudent."—That is κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν,—'as much as we can;' that is, with a hearty, righteous, sincere endeavour: for so ὅσιος, or 'holy,' is used. It signifies sincere, true, without error. Οὐχ ὅσιόν ἐστι τὰ μέγαλα σοφὸν γενέσθαι τὸν τὰ μικρὰ μὴ δυνάμενον. So Damascius in Suidas: "It is not likely or true, that he that is not wise in little things, should be wise in great things." But to live holily in the Christian sense, is to live in faith and good works; that is Christian perfection, Ὁ τῷ Θεῷ διὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγαθοεργίας οἰκειωθεὶς ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος ὀνομάζεται εἰκότως·—'He is good and holy, who, by faith and good works, is like unto God.' For this perfection or ὁσιότης,—

° Heb. vii. 10.

'holiness' is nothing else but a pursuance of that which is just and good; for so said Moses concerning the man that forsook God, and denied that he had made a covenant with him; "Do not say in thine heart, Ὅσιά μου γένοιτο ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου,—'Let it be lawful or holy, or permitted to me to depart from the Lord.'" To this sense was that of Justin Martyr, who expounds this phrase of "Be ye perfect" by 'Christianum fieri;' 'Be perfect,' that is, 'Be Christians,' be Christ's disciples: for he who came ἀναπληρῶσαι τὸν νόμον, —'to fulfil,' to consummate obedience, to perfect 'the law,' —to obey him, and be disciples of his institution, is our perfection and consummation.

44. IV. This perfection of state, although it does not suppose a perfection of degrees, yet it can be no less than, 1. A perfection of parts. It must be a religion that is not mingled with interest, piety to God that is not spoiled with cruelty to our neighbours, a zeal that hath in it no uncharitableness or spite; that is, our religion must be entire, and not defective in any constituent part. So St. James uses the word τέλειοι for ὁλόκληροι,—"perfect and entire, wanting nothing."[p] 2. To which add this also, that to this perfection of state, perseverance is of necessity to be added. For so we are taught by the same apostle; "Let patience have her perfect work;" that is, let it bear you through all your trials, lasting till all your sufferings are over; for he that endures to the end shall be crowned, because he only is perfect. Our holiness must persevere to the end. But, 3. it must also be growing all the way. For this word 'perfect' is sometimes in Scripture used for degrees, and as a distinction between Christians in the measures of duty. St. Paul uses it to signify 'well-grown Christians,' or men in Christianity. Στῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληρωμένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ·—"stand perfectly and full," or, "confidently fulfilling all the will of God;"[q] for therefore "we preach Christ, and exhort every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man" τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,—"perfect in Christ Jesus;"[r] that is, that they should not always be as babes, for whom milk and weak nutriment are to be provided; nor like those silly women, 'always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;' but it is commanded

[p] James, i. 4. [q] Col. iv. 12. [r] Ibid. i. 28.

us to be wise and perfect, 'to be men in Christ;' so St. Paul makes the antithesis; "Be ye babes in malice, but in your minds, τέλειοι γίνεσθε,—be perfect;"[s] that is, Be men, wise, and confident, and strong, and well grown. "Perfectly instructed;" that is, readily prepared to every good work;" not always employed in the elements, and infant propositions, and practices of religion, but doing noble actions, well skilled in the deepest mysteries of faith and holiness. This is agreeable to that expression of St. Paul, who, having laid the foundation of Christianity, by describing the fundamentals, intending to speak of the more mysterious points of the religion, calls it 'a going on to perfection:'[t] so that by this precept of perfection it is intended we should do more than the lowest measure of our duties, and there is no limit, but even the utmost of our power; all that we can, is the measure of our duty: I do not say, all that we can naturally or possibly; but all that we can morally and probably, according to the measures of a man, and the rate of our hinderances and infirmities.

45. V. But the last sort and sense of perfection, is that which our blessed Saviour intended particularly in the instance and subject-matter of this precept, and that is, a perfection in the kind of action, that is, a choice and prosecution of the most noble and excellent things in the whole religion. Three are especially instanced in the holy Gospel.

(1.) The first is,—a being ready, or a making ourselves ready to suffer persecution,—prescribed by our blessed Saviour to the rich young man; "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all and give to the poor;" that is, If thou wilt be my disciple, make thyself ready, "and come and follow me."[u] For it was at that time necessary to all that would follow Christ's person and fortune, to quit all they had above their needs. For they that followed him were sure of a cross; and therefore to invite them to be disciples, was to engage them to the suffering persecution; and this was that which our blessed Saviour calls perfection.

> —— Dulce periculum est
> (O Lenæe!) sequi Deum
> Cingentem viridi tempora pampino.[x]

It is an easy thing to follow God in festivals and days of

[s] 1 Cor. xiv. 20. [t] Heb. vi. 1. [u] Matt. xix. 21. [x] Hor. iii. 25. 18.

eucharist; but to serve him in hard battles, to die for him, is the perfection of love, of faith, and obedience. 'Obedient unto death,' was the character of his own perfection; for "greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life." "Scis quem dicam bonum, perfectum, absolutum? Quem malum facere nulla vis, nulla necessitas potest;—He is good, absolute, and perfect, whom no force, no necessity, can make evil."[y]

(2.) The second instance is, being merciful; for St. Luke, recording this precept, expounds it by ἐλεήμονες,—'Be ye perfect,'[z] that is, "Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;" for by mercy only we can be like him. Ὅστις τοῦ πλησίου ἀναδέχεται βάρος, ὃς ἐν ᾧ κρείσσων ἐστὶν ἕτερον τὸν ἐλαττούμενον εὐεργετεῖν ἐθέλει, ὅσα παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λαβὼν ἔχει, ταῦτα τοῖς ἐπιδεομένοις χορηγῶν, Θεὸς γίνεται τῶν λαμβανόντων, οὗτος μιμητὴς τοῦ Θεοῦ.—"He that bears his neighbours' burden, and is willing to do benefit to his inferiors, and to minister to the needy of the good things which God hath given him,—he is as God to them that receive, he is an imitator of God himself."[a] And Justin Martyr, reciting this precept of our blessed Saviour, instead of τέλειοι uses the word χρηστοὶ καὶ οἰκτίρμονες,—"Be ye good and bountiful, as your heavenly Father is." And to this purpose the story of Jesus and the young man before mentioned, is interpolated in the Gospel according to the Hebrews or the Nazarenes, "The Lord said unto him, How sayest thou, I have kept the law and the prophets, when it is written in the law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself? and behold, many of thy brethren, the sons of Abraham, are covered in filth, and die with hunger, and thy house is full of good things, and nothing goes forth to them from thence. If therefore thou wilt be perfect, sell all and give to the poor." Charity, which is the fulfilling the commandment, is also the perfection of a Christian: and that a giving of alms should be 'perfection,' is not disagreeing with the design of the word itself; τελεῖν γὰρ δαπανᾶν, say the grammarians; it signifies 'to spend;' and πολυτελὴς is a 'great spender,' or a bountiful person.

(3.) The third is the very particular to which our blessed Master did especially relate in the words of the sanction or institution: and we are taught it by the particle οὖν or

[y] Seneca. [z] Luke, vi. 36. [a] Scriptor ad Diognetum.

'therefore.' For when the holy Jesus had described that glory of Christianity, that "we should love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us," he propounds the example of our "heavenly Father; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good." But the publicans love their friends, and salute their brethren: but more is expected of us; "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;" that is, do more than the publicans, do as your Father does, be perfect as he is; that is, "love your enemies."

46. VI. Now, concerning this sense of the precept of perfection, which is the choice and pursuance of the noblest actions of religion, we must observe that they are therefore 'perfection,' because they suppose a man to have passed through the first and beginning graces, to have arrived at these excellences of piety and duty. For as no man can, on a sudden, become the worst man in the world, his soul must by degrees be unstripped of holiness, and then of modesty, and then of all care of reputation, and then of disuse; and by these measures he will proceed to the consummation of the method of hell and darkness: so can no man on a sudden come to the right use of these graces. Not every man that dies in a good cause shall have the reward of martyrdom; but he that, having lived well, seals that doctrine with dying, which before he adorned with living. And therefore it does infinitely concern all them that suffer in a good cause, to take care that they be not prodigal of their sufferings, and throw them away upon vice. Peevishness or pride, lust or intemperance, can never be consecrated by dying or by alms. But he that after a 'patient continuance in well-doing,' adds charity or martyrdom to the collective body of his other graces, he hath made them 'perfect' with this kind of 'perfection.' Martyrdom can supply the place of actual baptisms, but not of repentance: because without our fault it may so happen, that the first cannot be had; but, without our fault, the second is never left undone.

47. Thus perfection and repentance may stand together. Perfection does not suppose the highest intention of degrees in every one, but in all according to their measures of grace and time. Evangelical perfection is such as supposes a

beginning, an infant-grace, progression and variety, watchfulness and fear, trembling fear. And there are many graces required of us, whose material and formal part is repentance: such as are mortification,—penitential sorrow,—spiritual mourning,—patience,—some parts of humility,—all the parts and actions of humiliation;—and since in these also 'perfection' is as great a duty as in any thing else, it is certain that the perfection of a Christian is not the supreme degree of action or intention.

48. But yet perfection cannot be less than an entire piety, a holiness perfect in its parts, wanting nothing material, allowing no vicious habit, permitting no vile action, but contending towards the greatest excellence, a charitable heart, a ready hand, a confident religion, willing to die when we are called to die, patient, constant, and persevering, endeavouring *κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν*,—'according to the measures' of a man, to be pure and pleasing to God in Jesus Christ. This is the sum of all those several senses of perfection which are prescribed in the several uses of the word in Holy Scripture. For though God through Jesus Christ is pleased to abate for our unavoidable infirmities, that is, for our nature,—yet he will not abate or give allowance to our superinduced evil customs: and the reason is plain for both; because the one can be helped, and the other cannot; and therefore as to allow that is to be a patron of impiety, so not to allow for this, is to demand what cannot be done: *that* is against the holiness, *this* against the goodness, of God.

49. "There is not a man upon earth that sinneth not," said Solomon,[b] and, "the righteous shall be punished," said David;[c] and he found it so by a sad experience: for he, though affirmed to be 'blameless save in the matter of Uriah,' and 'a man after God's own heart,' yet complains, "that his sins are innumerable, more than the hairs upon his head." But though no man can live without error or mistake, the effects of weakness and ignorance, inadvertency and surprise, yet being helped by God's grace, we can, and must live without great sins, such which no man admits but with deliberation.

50. For it is one thing to keep the commandments in a sense of favour and equity, and another thing to be without

[b] 1 Kings, viii. 46. [c] Psalm xxxvii. 29. vet. edit.

sin. To keep the commandments κατ' ἀκρίβειαν, or 'exactly,' is to be without sin; because the commandment forbids every sin, and sin is a transgression of the commandment: but as in this sense no man can keep the commandments; so in no sense can he say, that he hath not sinned. But we can, by the help of God's grace, keep the commandments 'acceptably through Jesus Christ,' but we cannot keep them so as to be without sin. Which St. Gregory thus expresses: "Multi sine crimine, nullus verò esse sine peccatis valet;—Many live without crimes, none without offence." And it is now as it was under the law; many were then righteous and blameless; David, Josiah, Joshua, Caleb, Zachary, and Elizabeth, Saul before his conversion, according to the accounts of the law; and so are many now, according to the holy and merciful measures of the Gospel; not by the force of nature, but by the helps of grace; not always, but at some time; not absolutely, but in a limited measure; that is, not innocent, but penitent; not perfect absolutely, but excellently contending, and perfect in their desires; not at their journey's end, but on their way thither; free from great sins, but speckled with lesser spots; ever striving against sin, though sometimes failing. This is the precept of perfection, as it can consist with the measures and infirmities of a man.

51. We must turn from all our evil ways, leaving no sin unmortified, that is one measure of perfection; it is a 'perfect conversion.' We must have charity; that is another perfection; it is a 'perfect grace.' We must be ready to part with all for a good conscience, and to die for Christ; that is 'perfect obedience,' and the most 'perfect love.' We must conform to the Divine will in doing and suffering; that is 'perfect patience.' We must "live in all holy conversation and godliness;" that is a 'perfect state.' We must ever be going forward and growing in godliness, that so we may be 'perfect men in Christ.' And we must persevere unto the end; that is 'perfection,' and the crown of all the rest. If any thing less than this were intended, it cannot be told how the Gospel should be a holy institution, or that God should require of us to live a holy life; but if any thing more than this were intended, it is impossible but all mankind should perish.

52. To the same sense are we to understand those other severe precepts of Scripture of "being pure, unblamable,

without spot or wrinkle, without fault," that is, that we be honest and sincere, free from hypocrisy, just in our purposes and actions, without partiality and unhandsome mixtures. St. Paul[d] makes them to expound each other, ἀπρόσκοποι and εἰλικρινεῖς, 'sincere,' that is, without fault, pure and clear in conscience.

53. Like to this is that of 'toto corde,' loving and serving God 'with all our heart,' and with all our strength. That this is possible, is folly to deny. For he that saith, he cannot do a thing with all his strength, that is, that he cannot do what he can do, knows not what he says; and yet to do this is the highest measure and sublimity of Christian perfection, and of keeping the commandments. But it signifies two things: 1. Ἀνυποκρίτως,—'without hypocrisy,'—sincerely and heartily, opposite to that of 'corde et corde' in the Psalmist. "Corde et corde loquuti sunt;—they spake with a double heart:" but "the men of Zebulun went out to battle 'absque corde et corde,'" they "were not of a double heart,"[e] so St. Jerome renders it; but heartily, or with a whole heart, they did their business. 2. It signifies diligence and labour, earnestness and caution: "totus in hoc sum;" so the Latins use to speak; "I am earnest and hearty in this affair," I am wholly taken up with it.

54. Thus is the whole design of the Gospel rarely abbreviated in these two words of perfection and repentance. "God hath sent Jesus to bless you," ἐν τῷ ἀναστρέφειν ἕκαστον, "whilst," or "so that, every one of you turn from your iniquities."[f] He blesses us, and we must do our duty; he pardons us, and we obey him; 'He turns us, and we are turned.' And when St. Peter had represented the terrors of the day of judgment, he infers, "What manner of persons ought we to be," ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναστροφαῖς καὶ εὐσεβείαις,—"in holy living and holy worshippings?"[g] This he calls 'a giving diligence to be found' ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμώμητοι,—'without spot and umblamable;'[h] that is Christian perfection: and yet this very thing is no other than what he calls a little before εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι,—"a coming to repentance." Living in 'holy conversation and piety,' in the faith of Christ, is the extent and burden of repentance, and it is the limit and declaration of the

[d] Phil. i. 10. [e] 1 Chron. xii. 33. [f] Acts, iii. 26.
[g] 2 Peter, iii. 11–14. [h] Verse 9.

'spotless and unblamable.' This is no more, and that is no less.

55. Upon this account the commandments are not only possible but easy, necessary to be observed, and will be exacted at our hands as they are imposed. That is, 1. That we abstain from all deliberate acts of sin. 2. That we never contract any vicious habit. 3. That if we have, we quite rescind and cut them off, and make amends for what is past. 4. That our love to God be entire, hearty, obedient, and undivided. 5. That we do our best to understand God's will and obey it, allowing to ourselves deliberately or by observation not the smallest action that we believe to be a sin. Now, that God requires no more, and that we can do thus much, and that good men from their conversion do thus much, though in different degrees, is evident upon plain experience and the foregoing considerations. I conclude with the words of the Arausican Council: "Omnes baptizati, Christo auxiliante et cooperante, possunt et debent quæ ad salutem pertinent, si fideliter laborare voluerint, adimplere; — All baptized Christians may, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, if they will faithfully labour, perform and fulfil all things that belong to their salvation."

56. The sum of all is this: The state of regeneration is perfection all the way, even when it is imperfect in its degrees. The whole state of a Christian's life is a state of perfection. Sincerity is the formality or the soul of it: a hearty constant endeavour is the body or material part of it: and the mercies of God accepting it in Christ, and assisting and promoting it by his Spirit of grace, is the third part of its constitution, it is the Spirit. This perfection is the perfection of men, not of angels; and it is as in the perfection of glory, where all are perfect, yet all are not equal. Every regenerate man hath that perfection, without which he cannot be accepted, but some have this perfection more, some less. It is the perfection of state, but the perfection of degrees is not yet. Here men are διὰ τὸν πατρικὸν νοῦν τελειούμενοι,— "made perfect according to the measure of their fathers," as Porphyry expressed it; that is, by the measures of mortality, or as it pleases God to enable and accept them.

SECTION IV.

The former Doctrine reduced to Practice.

1. The law is either taken for 'the law of Moses,' or 'the law of works:' the law of works is that empire and dominion which God exercised over man, using his utmost right, and obliging man to the rigorous observation of all that law he should impose upon him. And in this sense, it was a law of death, not of life; for no man could keep it; and they that did not, might not live. This was imposed on Adam only.

2. But when God brought Israel out of Egypt, he began to make a covenant with them, with some compliance to their infirmities: for because little things could not be avoided, sacrifices were appointed for their expiation: which was a mercy as the other was a misery, a repentance as the sin: but for great sins there was no sacrifice appointed, no repentance ministered. And therefore still we were in the ministration of death: for this mercy was not sufficient; as yet it was not possible for a man to be justified by the law. It threatened sinners with death, it inflicted death, it did not promise eternal life, it ministered no grace, but fear and temporal hope; it was written in tables of stone, not in their hearts: that is, the material parts of the law of Moses were not consonant to natural and essential reason, but arbitrary impositions; they were not perfective of a man, but very often destructive. This was a little alteration or ease of the covenant of works, but not enough.

3. From this state of evil things we were freed by Christ; the law was called 'the letter,' 'the ministration of death,' 'the ministration of condemnation,' 'the old testament;' apt to amaze and confound a sinner, but did not give him any hopes of remission, no glimpse of heaven, no ministry of pardon: but the Gospel is called 'the Spirit,' or 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 'the law of faith,' 'the law of liberty;' it ministers repentance, it enjoins holiness, it gives life, and we all have hopes of being saved.

4. This, which is the state of things in which the whole world is represented in their several periods, is by some

made to be the state of every returning sinner: and men are taught that they must pass through the terrors of the law, before they can receive the mercies of the Gospel. The law was a schoolmaster to bring the synagogue to Christ; it was so to them who were under the law, but it cannot be so to us "who are not under the law, but under grace." For if they mean 'the law of works,' or that interposition which was the first intercourse with man, they lose their title to the mercies of the Gospel; if they mean 'the law of Moses,' then they do not "stand fast in the liberty, by which Christ hath made them free." But whatsoever the meaning be, neither of them can concern Christians. For God hath sent his Son to establish a better covenant in his blood, to preach repentance, to offer pardon, to condemn sin in the flesh, to publish the righteousness of God, to convince the world of sin by his Holy Spirit, to threaten damnation, not to sinners absolutely, but absolutely to the impenitent, and to promise and give salvation to his sons and servants.

5. I. The use that we Christians are to make of the law, is only to magnify the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, who hath freed us from so severe a covenant, who does not judge us by the measures of an angel, but by the span of a man's hand. But we are not to subject ourselves, so much as by fiction of law or fancy, to the curse and threatenings of the covenant of works, or of Moses's law, though it was of more instances and less severity, by reason of the allowance of sacrifices for expiation.

6. II. Every Christian man sinning, is to consider the horrible threatenings of the Gospel, the severe intermination of eternal pains, the goodness of God leading to repentance, the severity of his justice in exacting great punishments of criminals, the reasonableness of this justice punishing such persons intolerably, who would not use so great a grace in so pleasing a service, for the purchase of so glorious a reward. The terrors of the law did end in temporal death, they could affright no further; but in the Gospel, heaven and hell were opened, and laid before all mankind: and therefore, by these measures, a sinner is to enter into the sorrows of contrition and the care of his amendment. And it is so vain a thing to think every sinner must, in his repentance, pass under the terrors of the law, that this is a very

destruction of that reason, for which they are fallen upon the opinion. The law is not enough to affright sinners; and the terrors of the Gospel are far more to persevering and impenitent sinners, than the terrors of the law were to the breakers of it. The cause of the mistake is this: the law was more terrible than the Gospel is, because it allowed no mercy to the sinner in great instances: but the Gospel does. But then if we compare the state of those men who fell under the evils of the law, with these who fall under the evils threatened in the Gospel, we shall find these to be in a worse condition than those by far, as much as hell is worse than being stoned to death, or thrust through with a sword. This we are taught by that excellent author of the divine Epistle to the Hebrews;[1] "He that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" So that, under the Gospel, he that sins and repents, is in a far better condition, than he that sinned under the law, and repented. For repentance was not then allowed of; the man was to die without mercy. But he that sins and repents not, is, under the Gospel, in a far worse condition than under the law: for under the Gospel, he shall have a far sorer punishment, than under the law was threatened. Therefore, let no man mistake the mercies of the new covenant, or turn the grace of God into wantonness. The mercies of the Gospel neither allow us to sin, nor inflict an easier punishment; but they oblige us to more holiness, under a greater penalty. In pursuance of which, I add,

7. III. The covenant by which mankind must now be judged, is a covenant of more mercy, but also of more holiness: and therefore let no man think that now he is disobliged from doing good works, by being admitted to the covenant of faith: for though the covenants are opposed, as old and new, as a worse and a better, yet faith and works are not opposed. We are in the Gospel tied to more, and to more excellent works, than ever the subjects of any law were; but if, after a hearty endeavour, we fall into infirmity, and

[1] Heb. x. 28, 29.

still strive against it, we are pitied here, but there we were not. Under the first covenant, the covenant of works, no endeavour was sufficient, because there was no allowance made for infirmities, no abatements for ignorance, no deductions of exact measures, no consideration of surprises, passions, folly, and inadvertency; but under the new covenant, our hearty endeavour is accepted; but we are tied to endeavour higher and more excellent things than they. But he that thinks this mercy gives him liberty to do what he please, loses the mercy, and mistakes the whole design and economy of God's loving kindness.

8. IV. To every Christian it is enjoined, that they be perfect: that is, according to the measure of every one: which perfection consists in doing our endeavour. He that does not do that, must never hope to be accepted, because he refuses to serve God by something that is in his power. But he that does that, is sure that God will not refuse it; because we cannot be dealt withal upon any other account, but by the measures of what is in our power; and for what is not, we cannot take care.

9. V. To do our endeavour or our best, is not to be understood equally in all the periods of our life, according to the work or effect itself, nor according to our natural powers, but it is accounted for by the general measures and great periods of our life. A man cannot pray always with equal intention, nor give the same alms, nor equally mourn with sharpness for his sins. But God having appointed for every duty proper seasons and solemnities, hath declared, that *he* does his best, who heartily endeavours to do the duty in its proper season: but it were well we would remember, that he that did a good act to-day, can do the same to-morrow in the same circumstances; and he that yesterday fought a noble battle and resisted valiantly, can, upon the same terms, contend as manfully every day, if he will consider and watch. And though it will never be, that men will *always* do as well as *at some times*, yet when at any time they commit a sin, it is not because they could not, but because they would not, help it.

10. VI. He that would be approved in doing his best, must omit no opportunity of doing a good action; because, when it is placed in its proper circumstances, God lays his

hand upon it, and calls to have it done, and there can be no excuse for the omission. He does not do his best that does not do that, because such a person does voluntarily omit the doing of a good, without just cause; and that cannot proceed from an innocent principle.

11. VII. He that leaves any thing undone which he is commanded to do, or does what he is commanded to forbear, and considers or chooses so to do,—does not do his best, cannot plead his privilege in the Gospel; but is fallen under the portion of sinners: and will die, if he does not repent and make it up some way or other, by sorrow, and a future diligence.

12. VIII. To sin against our conscience, can, at no hand, consist with the duty of Christian perfection; because he loves not God with all his heart, nor serves him with all his strength, who gives some of his strength, and some of his affection, to that which God forbids.

13. IX. No man must account that he does his duty, that is, his best, or according to the perfection required of Christians, but he that does better and better, and grows towards the measures of the fulness of Christ. For 'perfection' is an infinite word; and it could not be communicated to several persons of different capacities and degrees, but that there is something common to them all, which hath analogy and equivalent proportions. Now nothing can be 'perfect,' but that to which nothing is wanting; and therefore a man is not any way perfect but by doing all, all that he can; for then nothing is wanting to him, when he hath put forth all his strength. For perfection is not to be accounted by comparing the subjects which are perfect; for in that sense nothing is perfect but God; but perfection is to be reckoned by every man's own proportions: for a body may be a perfect body, though it have not the perfection of a soul; and a man is perfect when he is heartily and entirely God's servant, though he have not the perfection of St. Paul; as a man is a meek man, though he be not so meek as Moses or Christ: but he is not meek, if he keeps any fierceness or violence within. But then, because to be more perfect is incident with human nature, he that does not endeavour to get as much as he can, and more than he hath, he hath not the perfection of holy desires. Therefore,

14. X. Every person that is in the state of grace, and designs to do his duty, must think of what is before him, not what is past; of the stages that are not yet run, not of those little portions of his course he hath already finished.

> Ut cum carceribus missos rapit ungula currus,
> Instat equis auriga suos vincentibus, illum
> Præteritum temnens extremos inter euntem.[k]

For so did the contenders in the Olympic races, never look behind but contend forwards: and from hence St. Paul[l] gives the rule I have now described. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling. Let therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded." That is, no man can do the duty of a Christian, no man can in any sense be perfect, but he that adds virtue to virtue, and one degree of grace unto another.

> Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum.[m]

"Nothing is finished, as long as any thing is undone." For our perfection is always growing; it stands not, till it arrive at the τελείωσις ἀθλήτου,—the crowning of him that runs. For the enforcing of which the more, I only use St. Chrysostom's argument; Εἰ δὲ ὁ τοσαῦτα παθὼν, εἰ δὲ ὁ διωκόμενος, εἰ δὲ ὁ τὴν νέκρωσιν ἔχων, οὔπω ἐθαῤῥεῖ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐκείνης, τί ἂν εἴπωμεν ἡμεῖς; If St. Paul, who had done so much, and suffered so much, was not very confident, but that if he did look back, he might also fall back; what shall we say, whose perfection is so little, so infant and imperfect, that we are come forwards but a little, and have great spaces still to measure?

15. XI. Let every man that is, or desires to be, perfect, endeavour to make up the imperfection or meanness of his services, by a great, a prompt, an obedient, a loving, and a friendly mind. For in the parable our blessed Lord hath taught us, that the servant who was bidden to plough the field, or feed the cattle, is still called an unprofitable servant,[n] because he hath done only what was commanded him; that is, they had done the work, 'utcunque,—some way or other;'

[k] Horat. Serm. lib. i. 114.
[l] Phil. iii. 13, 14.
[m] Lucan. ii. 657.
[n] Luke, xvii. 7.

the thing was finished, though with a servile spirit; for ποιεῖν properly signifies 'to do the outward work;' and the works of the law are those which consisted in outward obedience, and by which a man could not be justified. But our blessed Saviour, teaching us the righteousness of the kingdom, hath also brought the word ποιεῖν to signify the internal also; a mixture of faith and operation. For to the Jews inquiring, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" Jesus answers,[o] Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσητε, &c. — This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent:" and, since this,—"to do," in the Christian sense, is to do 'bona benè,—good works with a good mind.' For since the works are not only in themselves inconsiderable, but we also do them most imperfectly and with often failings,—a good mind, and the spirit of a friend or a son, will not only heighten the excellence of the work, but make amends for the defect too. 'The doing' what we are commanded, that is, in the usual sense of 'doing,' still leaves us 'unprofitable;' for we are servants of God, he hath a perfect and supreme right over us, and when this is done, still can demand more; when we have 'ploughed,' he will call upon us 'to wait at supper;' and for all this, we are to expect only impunity and our daily provisions. And upon this account, if we should have performed the covenant of works, we could not have been justified. But then, there is a sort of working, and there are some such servants which our Lord uses, "magis ex æquo et bono, quàm ex imperio;" with the usages of sons, not of slaves or servants. "He will gird himself, and serve them,[p]—he will call them friends, and not servants;" these are such as serve 'animo liberali,' such which Seneca calls 'humiles amicos,—humble friends,' serving, as St. Paul expresses it, ἐν ἁπλότητι καρδίας,—'in the simplicity of their heart;' not ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλείαις,—'with eye-service;' but honestly, heartily, zealously, and affectionately, ἑκουσίως, προθύμως, οὐκ ἀναγκαστῶς; so St. Peter, 'freely, readily, not grudgingly, or of necessity.'

16. XII. The proper effect of this is, that all the perfect do their services so, that their work should fail rather than their minds, that they do more than is commanded. "Exiguum

[o] John, vi. 28, 29. [p] Luke, xii. 37.

est ad legem bonum esse;" To be good according to the rigour of the law, to do what we are forced to, to do all that is lawful to do, and to go towards evil or danger as far as we can, these are no good signs of a filial spirit, this is not Christian perfection; τὸ μὲν ἐστιν ἐπίταγμα, *that* slaves consider; *this* is commanded and must be done under horrible pains: and such are the negative precepts of the law, and the proper duties of every man's calling. Τὸ δὲ τῆς προαιρέσεως κατόρθωμα,—This is an act of piety of mine own choosing, a righteousness that I delight in; that is the voice of sons and good servants, and that is rewardable with a mighty grace. And of this nature are the affirmative precepts of the Gospel, which being propounded in general terms, and with indefinite proportions, for the measures are left under our liberty and choice, to signify our great love to God. Ἅ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἐντολήν γίνεται, πολὺν ἔχει τὸν μισθὸν κατὰ τοῦτο, said St. Chrysostom;—"Whatsoever is over and above the commandments, that shall have a great reward." God forbids unmercifulness; he that is not unmerciful keeps the commandment; but he that, besides his abstinence from unmercifulness according to the commandment, shall open his hand and his heart, and give plentifully to the poor, this man shall have a reward; he is amongst those servants whom his "Lord will make to sit down, and himself will serve him." When God in the commandment forbids uncleanness and fornication; he that is not unchaste, and does not pollute himself, keeps the commandment. But if, to preserve his chastity, he uses fasting and prayer, if he mortifies his body, if he denies himself the pleasures of the world, if he uses the easiest, or the harder remedies, according to the proportion of his love and industry, especially if it be prudent,—so shall his greater reward be. If a man, out of fear of falling into uncleanness, shall use austerities, and find that they will not secure him, and therefore, to ascertain his duty the rather, shall enter into a state of marriage, according as the prudence and the passion of his desires were for God and for purity,—so also shall his reward be. To follow Christ is all our duty; but if, that we may follow Christ with greater advantages, we quit all the possessions of the world, this is more acceptable; because it is a doing the commandment with greater love. We must so order things that the commandment be

not broken; but the difference is in finding out the better ways, and doing the duty with the more affections.

17. Now in this case they are highly mistaken that think any thing of this nature is a work of supererogation: for all this is nothing but a pursuance of the commandment. For ἐντολή, or 'commandment,' is taken in a general sense, for the prescription of whatsoever is pleasing and acceptable to God, whatsoever he will reward with mighty glories. So 'loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and all our mind, and all our strength,' is called πρώτη καὶ μεγάλη ἐντολή, —'the first and the great commandment;'[q] that is, nothing is more pleasing, nothing more acceptable to God, because it proceeds out of an excellent love. But some commandments are propounded as to friends, some as to servants; some under the threatening of horrible pains, others not so, but with the proposition and under the invitation of glorious rewards. It was commanded to St. Paul to preach the Gospel: if he had not obeyed, he should have perished: "Wo is me," saith he, "if I preach not the Gospel:" he was bound to do it. But he had another commandment also, to love God as much as was possible, and to love his neighbour: which precepts were infinite, and of an unlimited signification, and, therefore, were left to every servant's choice to do them with his several measures of affection and zeal. He that did most, did the commandment best; and, therefore, cannot be said to do more than was commanded: but he that does less, if he preaches the Gospel, though with a less diligence, and fewer advantages, he obeys the commandment, but not so nobly as the other. For example: God commands us to pray. He obeys this, that constantly and devoutly keeps his morning and evening sacrifice, offering devoutly twice a-day. He that prays thrice a-day does better; and he that prays seven times a-day, hath done no work of supererogation, but does what he does in pursuance of the commandment. All the difference is, in the manner of doing what is commanded; for no man can do more than he is commanded. But some do it better, some less perfectly; but all is comprehended under this commandment, of loving God with all our hearts. When a father commands his children to come to him, he that comes slowly, obeys the commandment, but he that runs

[q] Matt. xxii. 37.

does obey more willingly and readily: now, though to come running was left to the choice of the child's affection, yet it was but a brisk pursuance of the commandment. Thus, when he that is bound to pay tithes gives the best portion, or does it cheerfully, without contention, in all questions taking the worse of the thing, and the better of the duty, does what he is commanded, and he does it with the affection of a son and of a friend, he loves his duty. "Be angry, but sin not:" so it is in the commandment: but he that, to avoid the sin, will endeavour not to be angry at all, is the greater friend of God, by how much the further he stands off from sin. Thus, in all doubts to take the surest side, to determine always for religion, when without sin we might have determined for interest; to deny ourselves in lawful things; to do all our duty by the measures of love and of the Spirit,—are instances of this filial obedience, and are rewarded by a *πεποίθησις καὶ παῤῥησία*,—'a persuasion and confidence' of God's love to us, enabling us to call him Father, as well as Lord. Thus this parable, or one like it, is told in the book of Hermas. "The lord commanded his servant to put pales about his vineyard: he did so, and digged a ditch besides, and rooted out all the weeds; which, when his lord observed, he made him coheir with his son." When St. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to give a free contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem, he invites to do it nobly and cheerfully, not as of constraint; for God's commandment named not the sum, neither can the degree of affection be named; but yet God demands all our affection. Now, in all the affirmative precepts, the duty in the lowest degree is that which is now made necessary under the loss of all our hopes of eternity; but all the farther degrees of the same duty, are imposed upon the condition of greater rewards, and other collateral advantages of duty.

When Hystaspes asked Cyrus the Persian why he preferred Chrysantas before him, since he did obey all his commands: the prince answered,[r] *Χρυσάντας οὑτοσὶ πρῶτον μὲν οὐ κλῆσιν ἀνέμενεν, ἀλλὰ πρὶν καλεῖσθαι παρῆν τῶν ἡμετέρων ἕνεκα· ἔπειτα δὲ οὐ τὸ κελευόμενον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅ, τι αὐτὸς γνόιη ἄμεινον εἶναι πεπραγμένον ἡμῖν, τοῦτο ἔπραττεν.*—"Chrysantas does not stay till he is called; and he does not only what is commanded,

[r] Xen. Cyrop. viii. 4. 11. Schneider.

but what is best, what he knows is most pleasing to me." So does every perfect man, according to the degrees of his love and his perfection: Τῷ τελείῳ οὐκ ἐν συμβολαίοις πολιτικοῖς οὐδ' ἐν ἀπαγορεύσει νόμος, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰδιοπραγίας καὶ τῆς πρὸς Θεὸν ἀγάπης ἡ δικαιοσύνη.[s]—'The righteousness of a perfect man consists not in legal innocence, but in love and voluntary obedience.' This is that charity which is the glory of Christianity, the crown of all other graces, that which makes all the external works of obedience to be acceptable, and every act of the most excellent piety and devotion is a particular of that grace; and, therefore, though it is highly acceptable, yet it is also commanded in the general, and in the sense before explicated; and he that does no more than he is particularly commanded, obeys God, as a lion obeys his keeper: meat and stripes are all the endearments of his peace and services.

> Qui manet, ut moneatur semper, servos homo, officium suum,
> Nec voluntate id facere meminit, servos is habitu haud probus est.[t]

'The servant that must be called upon at every step, is but an unprofitable and unworthy person:' to do only what we are commanded, will never bring us to the portion and inheritance of sons. We must do this cheerfully, and we must do more; even contend to please God with doing that which is the righteousness of God, striving for perfection, till perfection itself becomes perfect; still obeying that law of sons, 'Love the Lord with all thy heart,' till our charity itself is crowned. Therefore,

19. XIII. Let no man propound to himself a limit of duty, saying, he will go so far, and go no farther. For the commandment is infinite, and though every good man obeys it all the way of his holy conversation, yet it shall not be finished till his life is done. But he that stints himself to a certain measure of love, hath no love at all; for this grace grows for ever; and when the object is infinite, true love is not at rest till it hath possessed what is infinite; and, therefore, towards that there must be an infinite progression, never stopped, never ceasing, till we can work no more.

20. XIV. Let every man be humbled in the sense of his failings and infirmities. "Multum in hâc vita ille profecit, qui quàm longè fit a perfectione justitiæ proficiendo cognovit,"

[s] Clem. Alex. Strom. 5. [t] Plautus Stich. act. i. sc. 2. 1. Schnieder. p. 761.

said St. Austin:[u] 'It is a good degree of perfection to have proceeded so far, as well to know and observe our own imperfections.' The Scripture concludes all under sin; not only because all have failed of the covenant of works, of the exactness of obedience, but by reason of their prevarication of that law which they can obey. And, indeed, no man could be a sinner, but he that breaks that law which he could have kept. We were all sinners by the covenant of works, but that was in those instances where it might have been otherwise. For the covenant of works was not impossible, because it consisted of impossible commandments; for every commandment was kept by some or other, and all at some times: but, therefore, it was impossible to be kept, because, at some time or other, men would be impotent, or ignorant, or surprised, and for this, no abatement was made in that covenant. But then, since in what every man could help he is found to be a sinner, he ought to account it a mighty grace that his other services are accepted. In pursuance of this,

21. XV. Let no man boast himself in the most glorious services and performances of religion. "Qui in ecclesiâ semper gloriosè et granditer operati sunt, et opus suum Domino nunquam imputaverunt," as St. Cyprian's expression is;[x]—"They who have greatly served God in the Church, and have not been forward to exact and challenge their reward of God," they are such whom God will most certainly reward. For "humility without other external works is more pleasing to God than pride, though standing upon heaps of excellent actions." It is the saying of St. Chrysostom. For if it be as natural to us to live according to the measures of reason, as for beasts to live by their nature and instinct, what thanks are due to us for that, more than to them for this? And, therefore, one said well, "Ne te jactes si benè servisti: obsequitur sol, obtemperat luna:—Boast not if thou hast well obeyed: the sun and the moon do so," and shall never be rewarded. But when ourselves and all our faculties are from God, he hath power to demand all our services without reward; and, therefore, if he will reward us, it must wholly be a gift to us that he will so crown our services. But he does not only give us all our being and all our faculties, but makes them also irriguous with the dew of his divine grace;

[u] De Spir. et Lit. c. xxxvi. [x] Epist. ad Lapsos.

sending his only Son to call us to repentance, and to die to obtain for us pardon, and resurrection, and eternal life; sending his Holy Spirit, by rare arguments, and aids external and internal, to help us in our spiritual contentions and difficulties.[y] So that we have nothing of our own, and therefore can challenge nothing to ourselves. But besides these considerations, many sins are forgiven to us, and the service of a whole life cannot make recompense for the infinite favour of receiving pardon: especially since, after our amendment and repentance, there are remaining such weaknesses and footsteps of our old impieties, that we who have daily need of the divine mercy and pity, cannot challenge a reward for that which in many degrees needs a pardon; for if every act we do should not need some degrees of pardon, yet our persons do in the periods of our imperfect workings. But after all this, all that we can do is no advantage to God;[z] he is not profited or obliged by our services; no moments do thence accrue to his felicities; and to challenge a reward of God, or to think our best services can merit heaven, is as if Galileo when he had found out a star which he had never observed before, and pleased himself in his own fancy, should demand of the grand signior to make him king of Tunis: for what is he the better, that the studious man hath pleased himself in his own heart, and the Turkish empire gets no advantages by his new argument? And this is so much the more material if we consider that the littleness of our services (if other things were away) could not countervail the least moment of eternity:[a] and the poor countryman might as well have demanded of Cyrus to give him a province for his handful of river-water, as we can expect of God to give us heaven as a reward of our good works.

22. XVI. But although this rule, relying upon such great and convincing grounds, can abolish all proud expectations of reward from God as a debtor for our good works, yet they ought not to destroy our modest confidence and our rejoicings in God, who by his gracious promises hath not only obliged himself to help us if we pray to him, but to reward us if we work. For "our God is merciful, he rewardeth every man according to his work:" so said David;[b] according

[y] Concil. Arausic. ii. c. 18. Debetur merces bonis operibus: sed gratia quæ non debetur præcedit. ut fiant.

[z] Job, xxxv. 7. [a] Rom. viii. 18. [b] Psalm lxii. 12.

to the nature and graciousness of the work,[c] not according to their value and proper worthiness; not that they deserve it, but because God for the communication of his goodness was pleased to promise it. "Promissum quidem ex misericordiâ sed ex justitiâ persolvendum," said St. Bernard: "Mercy first made the promise, but justice pays the debt." Which words were true, if we did exactly do all that duty to which the reward was so graciously promised; but where much is to be abated even of that little which was bound upon us by so glorious promises of reward, there we can in no sense challenge God's justice, but so as it signifies equity, and is mingled with the mercies of the chancery. "Gratis promisit, gratis reddit." So Ferus. "God promised freely, and pays freely."[d]—"If therefore thou wilt obtain grace and favour, make no mention of thy deservings. And yet let not this slacken thy work, but reinforce it, and enlarge thy industry, since thou hast so gracious a Lord:" who of his own mere goodness will so plentifully reward it.

23. XVII. If we fail in the outward work, let it be so ordered, that it be as little imputable to us as we can; that is, let our default not be at all voluntary, but wholly upon the accounts of a pitiable infirmity: for the law was a covenant of works, such as they were; but the mind could not make amends within for the defect without. But in the Gospel it is otherwise: for here the will is accepted for the fact, in all things where the fact is not in our power. But where it is, there to pretend a will, is hypocrisy. "Nequam illud verbum est, 'bene vult,' nisi qui bene facit," said the comedian. This rule is our measure in the great lines of duty, in all negative precepts, and in the periods of the law of Christ, which cannot pass by us without being observed. But in the material and external instances of duty, we may without our fault be disabled, and therefore can only be supplied with our endeavours and desires. But that is our advantage: we thus can perform all God's will acceptably. For if we endeavour all that we can, and desire more, and pursue more, it is accepted as if we had done all: for we are accepted "according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."[e] Unless we can neither endeavour nor desire,

[c] Matt. v. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 8. Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 2 Thess. i. 5. Apoc. iii. 4; xvi. 6. Rom. viii. 18.

[d] In Matt. lib. iii. c. 20, v. 8.

[e] 2 Cor. viii. 12.

we ought not to complain of the burden of the divine commandments. For to endeavour truly and passionately, to desire and contend for more, is obedience and charity, and that is the fulfilling of the commandments.

MATTER FOR MEDITATION OUT OF SCRIPTURE, ACCORDING TO THE FORMER DOCTRINE.

The old Covenant, or the Covenant of Works.

In that day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.[f]

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the law, to do them.[g]

And thou shalt write upon stones all the words of this law very plainly.[h]

Thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left.

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, then shall all these curses come upon thee, and overtake thee.[i]

And if you will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.[k]

He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses.[l]

The new Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace.

We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded: by what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.[m]

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are

[f] Gen. ii. 17. [g] Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxvii. 26. [h] Deut. xxvii. 8.
[i] Deut. xxviii. 14, 15. [k] Lev. xxvi. 23, 24, &c.
[l] Heb. x. 28. [m] Rom. iii. 24–28.

in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall not he with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.[n]

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.——All shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.[o]

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.—— Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.[p]

Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.[q]

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.[r]

Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things, shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise: The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt

[n] Rom. viii. 1, 14, 26–28, 33. [o] Heb. viii. 10–12. [p] 2 Cor. v. 17–21.
[q] Acts, ii. 38, 39. [r] Acts, ii. 21.

confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.[s]

Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.[t]

My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.[u]

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, hath for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.[x]

His commandments are not grievous.[y]

If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.[z]

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.[a]

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.[b]

Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.[c]

To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.[d]

Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.[e]

THE PRAYER.

I.

O ETERNAL God, Lord of heaven and earth, Father of men and angels, we do adore thy infinite goodness, we revere thy justice, and delight in thy mercies, by which thou has dealt with us, not with the utmost right and dominion

[s] Rom. x. 5-9. [t] 1 Cor. xv. 55–57. [u] Matt. xi. 30. [x] Rom. viii. 3, 4. [y] 1 John, v. 3. [z] Rom. v. 10, 11. [a] Phil. iv. 13. [b] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [c] Matt. vii. 7. [d] Matt. xxv. 29.
[e] 2 Cor. vii. 1. Vide etiam Isa. xlix. 6; liii. 12. Ps. xxii. 23–28. Jer. xxxii. 34.

of a lord, but with the gentleness of a father; treating us like friends, who were indeed thy enemies. Thou, O God, didst see our follies, and observe our weaknesses, thou knowest the averseness of our nature to good, and our proneness to commit vanity; and because our imperfect obedience could not bring us to perfect felicity, whither thou didst design us, the great God of all the world was pleased to make a new covenant with man, and to become a debtor to his servants. Blessed be God, and blessed be that mercy, which hath done so great things for us. O be pleased to work that in us which thou expectest from us. Let us not lose our title in the covenant of faith and repentance, by deferring the one, or dishonouring the other; but let us walk worthy of our vocation, according to the law of faith, and the mercies of God, and the covenant of our Lord Jesus.

II.

O BLESSED Jesus, never suffer us to abuse thy mercies, or to turn thy grace into wantonness. Let the remembrance and sense of thy glorious favours endear our services, and let thy goodness lead us to repentance, and our repentance bring forth the fruits of godliness in our whole life. Imprint deeply upon our hearts the fear and terror of thy majesty, and perpetually entertain our spirits with highest apprehensions of thy loving-kindness, that we may fear more, and love more; every day more and more hating sin, crucifying all its affections and desires, passionately loving holy things, zealously following after them, prudently conducting them, and indefatigably persevering in them to the end of our lives.

III.

O BLESSED and eternal God, with thy Spirit enlighten our understandings in the rare mysterious secrets of thy law. Make me to understand all the most advantageous ways of duty, and kindle a flame in my soul, that no difficulty or contradiction, no temptation within or persecution without, may ever extinguish. Give me a mighty grace, that I may design to please thee with my best and all my services, to follow the best examples, to do the noblest charities, to pursue all perfection, ever pressing forward to the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Let us rather choose to die,

than to sin against our consciences. Let us also watch, that we may omit nothing of our duty, nor pretermit any opportunity by which thou canst be glorified, or any Christian instructed, comforted, or assisted, not resting in the strictest measures of command, but passing forward to great and prudent significations of love, doing heroic actions; some things by which thou mayest be greatly pleased, that thou mayest take delight to pardon, to sanctify, and to preserve, they servants for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE NATURE AND DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE; AND WHAT PARTS OF DUTY ARE SIGNIFIED BY IT IN HOLY SCRIPTURES.

SECTION I.

The Greeks use two words to express this duty, *μεταμέλεια* and *μετάνοια*. *Μεταμέλεια* is from *μεταμελεῖσθαι*, 'post factum angi et cruciari,' to be afflicted in mind, to be troubled for our former folly: it is *δυσαρέστησις ἐπὶ πεπραγμένοις*, saith Phavorinus:—'a being displeased for what we have done:' and it is generally used for all sorts of repentance, but more properly to signify either the beginnings of a good, or the whole state of an effective repentance. In the first sense we find it in St. Matthew,[f] *ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰδόντες οὐ μετεμελήθητε ὕστερον, τοῦ πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ*; and "ye seeing, did not repent that ye might believe him." Of the second sense we have example in Judas,[g] *μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπέστρεψε*, he repented too, but the end of it was, he died with anguish and despair; and of Esau it is said, *μετανοίας τόπον οὐχ εὗρε*,—"he found no place for" an effective "repentance;" but yet he repented too, for he was *μετέπειτα θέλων*, and *μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας*, he fain would have had it otherwise, and he "sought it with tears;"[h] which two do fully express all the meaning of this *μεταμέλεια*, when it is distinguished from the better and effective repentance. There is in this repentance a sorrow for what is done, a disliking of the thing with its consequents and effect; and

[f] Matt. xxi. 32. [g] Matt. xxvii. 3. [h] Heb. xii. 17.

so far also it is a change of mind. But it goes no further than so far to change the mind, that it brings trouble and sorrow, and such things which are the natural events of it. Μεταμέλεια πάθος ἀνθρώπινον, saith Suidas. It is 'an affection incident to man,' not to God, who cannot repent: where although by πάθος he means 'an accident or property' of man, that is, a quality in the general sense; yet that it is properly a passion in the special sense, was the sense of all men, as Tertullian[i] observes; saying, that the heathens know repentance to be 'passionem animi quandam' (the same with πάθος ἀνθρώπινον in Suidas),—'a passion,' 'quæ veniat de offensa sententiæ prioris,—coming from our being offended, or troubled at our former course.' But Tertullian uses the Latin word, of which I shall give account in the following periods.

2. But when there was a difference made, μετάνοια was the better word; which does not properly signify the sorrow for having done amiss, but something that is nobler than it, but brought in at the gate of sorrow. For ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη,—'a godly sorrow,' that is μεταμέλεια, or the first beginning of repentance, μετάνοιαν κατεργάζεται, 'worketh' this better repentance, μετάνοιαν ἀμεταμέλητον, and εἰς σωτηρίαν,—'a repentance not to be repented of,' not to be sorrowed for, a repentance that is 'unto salvation.'[k] Sorrow may go before this, but dwells not with it, according to that of St. Chrysostom; "Medicinæ hic locus, non judicii; non pœnas sed peccatorum remissionem pœnitentia tribuit."[l] Μετάνοια is the word. "Repentance brings not pains, but pardon with it; for this is the place of medicine and remedy, not of judgment or condemnation:" meaning, that this repentance is wholly salutary, as tending to reformation and amendment. But Tertullian[m] made the observation more express: "In Græco sono, pœnitentiæ nomen non ex delicti confessione, sed ex animi demutatione compositum est;—To repent, among the Greeks, signifies, not a confession of our fault, but the change of mind." He speaks of the grammatical sense of the word; for in the whole use of it, it is otherwise.

3. For however the grammarians may distinguish them, yet the words are used promiscuously; for μετάνοια is sometimes

[i] Lib. de Pœnit.
[l] Homil. ix. de Pœnit.
[k] 2 Cor. vii. 10.
[m] Lib. ii. adv. Marcion. c. 20.

used in the bad sense, and *μεταμέλεια* signifies the better repentance; not often, but sometimes it does. The son[n] that told his father he would not work in his vineyard, afterward was sorry for refusing, and he went to work, *μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπῆλθε*; and in the same chapter, *ὑμεῖς ἰδόντες οὐ μετεμελήθητε.*—'ye seeing were not troubled, and sorrowful, that ye might believe, that is, amend your fault.' *Μεταμελεῖσθαι* is in both places used for 'a salutary repentance.' And on the other side, *μετάνοια* is used to signify, in the evil sense, 'a state of misery, without remedy.' *Πανοῦργος ἔρχεται εἰς μετάνοιαν*, so the Septuagint read that of Solomon;[o] "The wicked man cometh to repentance," that is, to misery and sorrow. So that there is nothing of usefulness which can be drawn from the grammatical sense of these words; they both signify a change of mind, and they both signify a sorrow; and they both are used for the same thing: and indeed that will be the best use of them: no man can be truly said to repent, but he who, being sorrowful for doing evil, betakes himself to wiser courses. So Phavorinus: *Μετάνοιά ἐστι συναίσθησις ψυχῆς ἐφ' οἷς ἔπραξεν ἀτόπως*—"Repentance is a sense and compunction of the soul for those things which were done foolishly."

Sum Dea, quæ facti, non factique exigo pœnas,
Nempe ut pœniteat: sic Metanœa vocor.[p]

Repentance does exact punishment for evils done, and good undone; but besides this, it is *ἡ πρὸς κρεῖσσον ἐπιστροφή*,—'a conversion to that which is better.' So Aretas defines it: *Μετάνοιά ἐστι μετάθεσις ἀπὸ χειρόνων, καὶ μεταξολὴ ἐπὶ βέλτιον*, the same with the former; 'an eschewing evil and doing good.'

4. And thus the Holy Scriptures understand this word and this duty. It is a whole change of state and life; *ἀποστροφὴ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, ἀπόστασις ἀπ' ἀδικίας*,[q]—'a turning from sin;' and it is emphatically called by the apostle, *μετάνοια ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων*,—'a repentance from dead works,' that is, a forsaking them with sorrow that ever we committed

[n] Matt. xxi. 29. [o] Prov. xiv.

[p] Auson. Epigr. xii. Delph. p. 12. Malè Metanœa usus est; verbum purum Græcum est, nec tamen eo sensu et definitione à Græcis usurpatam. Rectè igitur et facetè fassus est idem Ausonius in epigrammate de abusu hujus verbi parum Latini,

Sum Dea, cui nomen nec Cicero ipse dedit.

[q] Heb. vi. 1. 1 Kings, viii. 35. Isa. lix. 20. 2 Chron. vii. 14. Jer. xviii. 7–9; xxxi. 19. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

them: and it is also ἐπιστροφὴ πρὸς Θεὸν,—'a conversion to God;'[r] from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God: ἀνανήφειν,—'a returning to sobriety,' the same with μεταβάλλειν, μεταθέσθαι, μεταγινώσκειν, in Justin Martyr, all signifying a departing from our follies, and a changing to a better life. And though sometimes 'to repent' is, in Scripture, taken for sorrow only, or a being troubled that the fact is done; yet it is called repentance, no otherwise than as alms is called charity; that is, it is an effect of it, a part, or action, or adjunct, of the duty and state of repentance; which ought to be observed, lest (as it is too commonly) one act be mistaken for the whole state, and we account ourselves perfect penitents if we have only wept a penitential shower; which is also to be observed in the definitions which the doctors give of it.

5. Tertullian[s] calls it "a passion of the mind, or grief for the offence of our former acts:" St. Austin calls it,[t] "a revenge always punishing in itself that which it grieves to have committed." These do only describe that part of repentance which is sometimes signified by μεταμέλεια, and is nothing else but a godly sorrow, the porch, or beginnings of repentance. On the other side Lactantius[u] describing repentance, gives only the grammatical sense of μετάνοια. "Agere autem pœnitentiam nihil aliud est quam profiteri et affirmare se ulterius non peccaturum:—To repent is nothing else but a profession and affirmation, that he will sin no more;" which descriptions of repentance are just as if we should say,—A man is a creature that speaks, or laughs, or that can learn to read. These are effects of his nature, but not the ingredients of a proper definition. Sorrow and revenge, and holy purposes and protestations, are but single acts of a returning and penitent man: whereas repentance is a whole state of a new life, an entire change of the sinner, with all its appendages and instruments of ministry.

6. As the Greeks have, so have the Latins also, two words to signify this duty, 'pœnitentia' and 'resipiscentia,' and these have almost the same fate and the same usages with the other. 'Pœnitentia' is used by the old Latin translation;

[r] 2 Sam. xii. 5, 13. Deut. xxx. 2. Jer. iii. 7. Acts, xxvi. 18. Eph. v. 14. Ezek. xxxiii. 12. Luke, xix. 8–10.

[s] De Pœnit. in princip.

[t] Lib. de Ver. et Fals. Pœnit. c. 8.

[u] Lib. vi. Divin. Instit. c. 13.

and is most tenaciously retained by all them who make the very life of repentance to run into corporal austerities (like the juice of luxuriant trees into irregular suckers and excrescences), which therefore, by way of eminence, they call 'penances;' for they suppose the word, in its very nature and institution, to signify something that is punitive and afflictive. So Hugo: "Pœnitentia quasi punientia, quòd per eam homo in se puniat, quòd malè admisit."[x] Much like that of Scotus: "Pœnitentia quasi pœnæ tenentia;" which they both learned from St. Austin;"[y] "Pœnitere est idem quod rei commissæ aliquem pudere ac pigere, ita ut *pœnitet* sit idem quod *pœna tenet*." This sense of the word prevailed long, and therefore some that would speak exactly, observing that the duty of repentance did principally consist in the amendment of our lives, were forced to use the word 'resipiscentia,'[z] which better renders the Greek *μετάνοια*. So Lactantius expressly: "Græci melius et significantiùs *μετάνοιαν* dicunt: quam Latinè possumus 'resipiscentiam' dicere. Resipiscit enim, ac mentem suam quasi ab insania recipit, quem errare piget, castigatque seipsum dementiæ, et confirmat animum suum ad rectius vivendum:—He truly repents who recovers his mind from folly, and chastising his error, and grieving for his madness, strengthens his purposes to better living."

7. Either of the words will serve the turn. "Pœnitentia," or 'penance,' is the old Latin word: 'resipiscentia' is the new one, but very expressive and significant: and it is indifferent which be used, if men had not a design upon one, which cannot prudently be effected by it. But such is the force of words, especially when men choose and affect one particularly, and studiously reject another, which is apt to signify the same thing,—that, in the Greek Church, because their words for 'repentance' did imply only or principally 'a change of life' they usually describe 'repentance' in that formality; but the later Latins practise and discourse to other purposes; and the college of Rheims render *μετανοεῖτε*, word for word after their vulgar Latin; 'agite pœnitentiam,—do pènance;' which is so absurd a reddition, that their interest and design are more apparent than their skill in grammar, or their ingenuity. It is much, very much better, which we learn from a wise heathen, who gives such

[x] Lib. iii. de Myste. Eccles. [y] Solil. c. xix. [z] Lib. vi. c. xxiv.

an account both of the words and thing, as might not misbecome the best instructed Christian, so far as concerns the nature and morality of the duty: his words are excellent words, and therefore I shall transcribe them. *Διὸ πειρᾶσθαι δεῖ μάλιστα μὲν μὴ ἁμαρτάνειν· ἁμαρτόντας δὲ σπεύδειν, ὡς ἐπὶ ἰατρικὴν τῆς πονηρίας τὴν δίκην, ἐπανορθουμένους τὴν ἀβουλίαν τῇ κρείττονι βοηθείᾳ· ἐπεὶ γὰρ τοῦ εἶναι ἀγαθοὶ ἐκπεπτώκαμεν, τοῦ γίνεσθαι γοῦν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα μεταμελείᾳ εὐγνώμονι, τὴν θείαν ἐπανόρθωσιν εἰσδεχόμενοι. Ἡ δὲ μετάνοια αὕτη φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται, καὶ τῶν ἀνοήτων ἔργων τε καὶ λόγων φυγή, καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἡ πρώτη παρασκευή.*[a]— "We ought principally to take care that we do not sin; but if we be overtaken, then to make diligent haste to return to justice or righteousness as the cure of our wickedness; that we may amend our evil counsels or wills, by the help of a better. For when we are fallen from goodness, we receive or recover it again *μεταμελείᾳ εὐγνώμονι*, by a wise or well-principled penitential sorrow, admitting a divine correction. *Ἡ δὲ μετάνοια αὕτη*, but repentance itself is the beginning of wisdom, a flying from foolish words and deeds, and the first institution of a life not to be repented of." Where, besides the definition of repentance and a most perfect description of its nature and intention, he with some curiosity differences the two Greek words; making *μεταμέλεια* to be but the beginning of *μετάνοια*: 'sorrow' from the beginning of 'repentance;' and both together the reformation of the old, and the institution of a new life.

8. But to quit the words from being the subject matter of a quarrel, it is observable that the Latin word 'pœnitentia,' does really signify (by use, I mean, and custom) as much as the Greek *μετάνοια*, and is expressive of the whole duty of repentance; and although it implies that sorrow and grief, which are the natural inlet of reformation of our lives, and the consequent of our shame and sin, yet it also does signify correction and amendment, which are the formality and essence of repentance: and therefore Erasmus more warily, and in imitation of the old Latins, says, that 'pœnitere' is from 'pone tenere,' 'quod est posterius consilium capere;' to be wiser the next time; to choose again, and choose better; and

[a] Hierocl. in Pythag. Aur. Carm. Needham, p. 124.

so A. Gellius[b] defines it: "Pœnitere, tum dicere solemus, cum quæ ipsi fecimus, aut quæ de nostrâ voluntate nostroque consilio facta sunt, ea nobis pòst incipiunt displicere, sententiamque in iis nostram demutamus;—To repent is, when those things which we have done, displease us, and we change our minds." So that here is both a 'displeasure' and a 'change;' a displeasure and sorrow for the evil, and a change to better. And there ought to be no scruple in this; for by the first sorrow of a penitent man, is meant nothing else but the first act of eschewing evil: which whether it be by grief alone, or by fear, or by hope, or by all these, it is not without some trouble of mind, and displeasure; for if it were still in all senses a pleasure to go on, they would never return back. And therefore to suppose repentance without displeasure, is to suppose a change of mind without alteration, or a taking a new course without disliking the old. But then to suppose any other sorrow naturally necessary than this which naturally is included in the change, is to affirm that to be true which experience tells us is not true; and it is to place self-affliction and punition at the head, which is to be looked for in the retinue, of repentance; to make the daughter to be before the mother, and the fruit to be kept in the root, not to grow upon the branches. But the Latin words can no way determine any thing of question in this article; and the Greek words are used promiscuously; and when they are distinguished, they differ but as the more and less perfect, as the beginning of repentance and the progress of perfection; according to that saying, "Pœnitentia erroris magnus gradus est ad resipiscentiam;—To acknowledge and be sorry for our sin, is a great step to repentance;"—and both together signify all that piety, that change, and holiness, which are the duty of the new man, of the returning sinner: and we can best learn it by the words of him that revealed and gave this grace to all his servants; even of the Holy Jesus speaking to St. Paul at his conversion; from whose blessed words, together with those of St. Paul in his narrative of that story, we may draw this more perfect description. To repent is to "turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God,[c] doing works worthy of amendment of life, for the forgiveness of sins, that we may receive inherit-

[b] Noct. Att. lib. xvii. c. 1. [c] Acts, xxvi. 18, 20.

ance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus."

9. Upon this account, the parts of repentance are two; 1. 'Leaving our sins:' which is properly repentance from dead works. And, 2. 'Doing holy actions' in the remaining portion of our days; "actions meet for repentance," so the Baptist called them. This is in Scripture, by way of propriety, called repentance: μετάνοια, so the Baptist[d] used it; distinguishing repentance from its fruits; that is, from such significations, exercises, and prosecutions, of this change, as are apt to represent and to effect it more and more; such as are confession, weeping, self-afflictions, alms, and the like. So St. Paul, using the same words before King Agrippa.[e] But by way of synecdoche, not only the fruits and consequent expressions, but the beginning-sorrow also is signified by the same word: and all are under the same commandment, though with different degrees of necessity and expression; of which I shall afterward give account. Here I only account concerning the essential and constituent parts and definition of repentance.

10. All the whole duty of repentance, and every of its parts, is sometimes called conversion. Thus godly sorrow is a conversion or change: and upon that account St. James[f] calls upon sinners; "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into weeping." This is the first change of our affections, which is attended with a change of our judgment: when we do no longer admire the false beauties of sin; but judge righteously concerning it. And of this the prophet Jeremy[g] gives testimony; "Surely, after that I was turned, I repented." And by this word נָחַם the Hebrews express the duty; which the LXX. indifferently render by μετάνοια and μεταμέλεια, and is best rendered 'conversion.' And then follows the conversion of the whole man, body and soul, mind and spirit; all are set in opposition against sin, and apply themselves to the service of God, and conformity to Jesus.

[d] Matt. iii. 8. [e] Acts, xxvi. 20. [f] James, iv. [g] Jer. xxxi. 19.

SECTION II.

Of Repentance in general: or Conversion.

1. 'REPENTANCE' and 'faith' in Scriptures signify sometimes more generally; and, in the federal sense, are used for all that state of grace and favour which the holy Jesus revealed and brought into the world. They both signify the Gospel; for the whole Gospel is nothing else but that glad tidings which Christ brought to all mankind, that the covenant of works, or exact measures, should not now be exacted, but men should be saved by second thoughts, that is, by repentance and amendment of life, through faith in the Lord Jesus. That is, if we become his disciples (for that is the condition of the covenant), we shall find mercy, our sins shall be blotted out, and we shall be saved if we obey heartily and diligently, though not exactly. This becoming his disciples, is called 'faith;' that is, coming to him, believing him, hoping in him, obeying him; and consequent to this is, that we are admitted to repentance, that is, to the pardon of our sins. "For him hath God exalted on his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, δοῦναι μετάνοιαν καὶ ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν,—to give repentance and remission of sins."[h] This is the sum total of the Gospel. That we have leave to repent, supposes that God will pardon what is past. But then that we have leave to repent, supposes us also highly bound to it. It is in mere pity to our infirmities, our needs, and our miseries, that we have leave to do it: and this is given to mankind by faith in Jesus Christ, that is, by becoming his disciples; for he hath power to pardon sins, and to 'take them away, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,' viz. which we have committed. This is that which all the world did need, and longed for; it was the κρυπτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων,—'the hidden mystery from all ages, but revealed in Christ;' whose blood (as St. Clement expresses it) παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑπήνεγκεν,—"brought to all the world the grace of repentance."

2. This is the Gospel.—For the Gospel is nothing else but faith and repentance. The Gospel is called 'faith' by St. Paul, πρὸ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν,—"before that faith came

[h] Acts, v. 31.

we were under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed;"[j] that is, to the Gospel, or the glad tidings of repentance; which is called ἀκοὴ πίστεως,—"the hearing of faith."[k] For 'faith' being here opposed to 'the law,' that is, the covenant of mercy to the covenant of works, must mean, 'the covenant of repentance.' And therefore, although, if we consider them as proper and particular graces and habits, they have differing natures and definitions; yet in the general and federal sense of which I now speak, faith and repentance are only distinguished by relations and respects, not by substance and reality. "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;"[l] that is, repentance for having sinned against God; a repentance, I say, through faith in Jesus Christ; that is, a repentance procured, and preached, and enjoined, by Christ, being the sum of his discipline. And that it may appear faith and repentance to be the same thing, and differing only in name and manner of expression, St. Paul confounds the distinction which he formerly made, and that which he called "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus," in his sermons in Asia; in his Epistle to the Hebrews, he calls "repentance from dead works and faith in God." And the words are used for each other promiscuously in St. Luke; for that which the rich man in hell called μετανοήσουσιν, Abraham called πεισθήσονται. "If one comes from the dead they will repent:" no, said Abraham, "if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, then if one come from the dead, they will not believe, or be persuaded." And St. Peter,[m] giving an account of the delaying of the coming of the Lord for the punishment of the obdurate Jews and enemies of Christ, says, it is because God of his infinite goodness expects even them also to be converted to the faith, or becoming Christians, as the whole design of the place infers; and this he calls εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι,—"a coming to repentance," that is, to the faith of Christ. And therefore the Gospel is nothing else but a universal publication of repentance and pardon of sins in the name of Christ, that is procured for all them who are his disciples: and to this we are baptized, that is, adopted into the religion, into that discipleship under which God requires holiness, but not perfect mea-

[j] Gal. iii. 23. [k] Verse 2. [l] Acts, xx. 21. [m] 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.

sures; sincerity without hypocrisy, but not impeccability or perfect innocence.

3. And as the Gospel is called faith, and faith is repentance, that is, it is the same covenant of grace and mercy, with this only difference, that it is called faith, as it relates to Christ who procured this mercy for us, repentance, as it signifies the mercy itself so procured: so baptism, by the same analogy, is called "the baptism unto repentance," *βάπτισμα τῆς μετανοίας*,—'the baptism of repentance;' so it is called in the Jerusalem creed; that is, the admission to the grace of the Gospel; which the fathers of Constantinople, in their appendage to the Nicene creed, thus express: "I believe one baptism for the remission of sins;" that is, to remission of sins we are admitted by baptism alone: no other way shall we have this grace, this title, but by being once initiated into the Gospel to be disciples of Jesus. Not that it is to be supposed, that our sins are only pardoned when we are baptized; but that by baptism we are admitted to the state and grace of repentance and pardon of sins. And this is demonstratively certain, not only upon those many instances of baptized penitents admitted to pardon, and baptized criminals called upon in Scripture to repent,—but upon the very nature of the evangelical covenant, and the whole design of Christ's coming. For if we were not admitted to repentance after baptism, then we were still to be judged by the covenant of works, not by the covenant of faith: and we should inherit by the law, or not at all, and not be 'heirs according to promise;' and then 'Christ were dead in vain, we are yet in our sins;' and all the world must perish, because all men have sinned, and so none should go to heaven but newly baptized infants, or newly baptized catechumens: and how then could the Gospel be a new covenant, it being exactly the same with the law; for so it must be, if it promise no mercy or repentance to them that sin after our admittance to it. But baptism is a new birth, and by it we are *ἀναχαινιζόμενοι εἰς μετάνοιαν*,—"renewed unto repentance," unto that state of life which supposes holiness and imperfection, and consequently needs mercy all the way: according to that saying, "Justus ex fide vivet;—The just shall live by faith;" that is, all our righteousness, all our hopes, all our spiritual life, is conserved by, and is

relying upon, this covenant of mercy, the covenant of faith, or repentance: all his lifetime the just shall still need pardon, and find it, if he perseveres in it,—that is, endeavours to obey according to the righteousness of faith, that is, sincerely, diligently, and by the measures of a man. Of this, we shall, in the sequel, make use.

4. For the present I consider, that repentance or conversion admits of degrees according to the necessities of men. For that repentance which Christ and his apostles preached at the opening of the kingdom, was a universal change of life, which men did lead in the darkness of heathen ignorance and idolatrous impieties among the Gentiles, and the more than heathen crimes among the Jews; the whole nation being generally false, superstitious, bloody, persecutors, proud, rebellious, and at last rejecters and crucifiers of their Messias, whom they had longed for ever since they were a people: but in the persuasion and effecting of this repentance, there was some difference of dispensation and ministry.

5. John the Baptist began, and he preached repentance to the Jews, that 'they might believe in the Messias, and so flee from the wrath to come,' that is, from the destruction of their nation, which he prophetically foretold should come to pass, for their rejecting him whom the Baptist did foresignify. Christ and his apostles pursued the same doctrine, still thrusting forward the design, that is, preaching such a repentance as was proportionable to his purpose; that is, obedience to the Gospel, the admission of such doctrines which did destroy the gaieties and cursed usages of the world. So that the repentance which was first preached, was in order to faith; that is, the Baptist, and Christ, and Christ's apostles, preaching repentance, did mean such a conversion or change as would take them off from those crimes which so prepossessed their hearts, that by them they were indisposed to receive Christ's person and doctrine, both which were so contrary to their prejudices of pride and covetousness, malice and ambition.

6. And therefore among the Jews, repentance was to go before faith: for they were already sufficiently disposed to believe the revelations of God, they had been used to prophets, and expected the Messias, and prayed for his day, and longed passionately for it; so that they were by nothing

hindered in their faith, but by their lusts and secular thoughts; and the way to make them believe, was to cure their pride. "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?"[n] Their hunting after praise among the people, did indispose them to the believing and receiving Christ's person and doctrine. Therefore until they did repent of that, they could not believe; and accordingly our blessed Saviour complained, that when they saw the light which shined in the ministry of John the Baptist, "yet they would not repent, that they might believe." But afterward the Jews, when they were invited to the religion, that is, to believe in Jesus, were first to be called to repentance, because they had crucified the Lord of life: and if they should not repent for crucifying an innocent person, they would be infinitely far from believing him to be the Lord of life, and their long-desired Messias.

7. But the repentance that was preached to the Gentiles, though it had the same design, as to the event of things, yet it went in another method. Their religion taught them impiety, lust and folly were placed upon their altars, and their gods bore in their hands smoking firebrands kindled with the coals of Sodom: they had false confidences, and evil examples, and foolish principles; they had evil laws, and an abominable priesthood; and their demons, whom they called gods, would be worshipped with lusts and cruelty, with drunkenness and revellings; so that their false belief and evil religion betrayed them to evil lives, therefore they were to be recovered by being taught a better belief, and a more holy religion, therefore in these, faith was to go before repentance. "Pœnitentiæ stimulus ex fide acciderat," as Tertullian's expression is: "Faith was the motive of their repentance."—Πίστεως ἡ μετάνοια κατόρθωμα. So St. Clemens Alexandrinus:[o] Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσῃ ἁμάρτημα εἶναι ᾧ προκατείχετο, οὐδὲ μεταθήσεται· κἂν μὴ πιστεύσῃ κόλασιν μὲν ἐπηρτῆσθαι τῷ πλημμελοῦντι, σωτηρίαν δὲ τῷ κατὰ τὰς ἐντολὰς βιοῦντι, οὐδ' οὗτος μεταβαλεῖται· ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς ἐκ πίστεως συνέστηκεν.—"Repentance is the perfection and consummation of faith. For unless the sinner believes his action to be a sin, and that evil is his portion if he sins, and that he shall be happy if he live by the rule of the commandments, he can never be

[n] John, v. 44. [o] Strom. ii.

converted."—Therefore, in the conversion of the Gentiles, faith was to be ordinarily the first.

8. In proportion to these several methods, the doctrine or state of Christianity was sometimes called "faith,"[p] sometimes "repentance:"[q] he that believed Jesus Christ, would repent of his sins: and he that did repent, would believe. But sometimes infidelity stood at the gate, and sometimes malice and vile affections. That which stood next, was first to be removed.

9. Now the access of both these to Christ is in Scripture called 'conversion,' or repentance. Where faith only was wanting, and the man was of Moses and a good man, the becoming a Christian was a τελείωσις,—'a perfection' or 'consummation,'—'a progression' rather than a 'returning,' προκοπὴ not ἀναστροφή. But when Christ had been preached, all the obfirmation and obstinacy of mind by which they shut their eyes against that light, all that was choice, and interest, or passion, and was to be rescinded by repentance. But 'conversion' was the word indifferently used concerning the change both of Jews and Gentiles, because they both abounded in iniquity, and did need this change called by St. Paul ἀπολύτρωσις ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας,—'a redemption from all iniquity;' by St. Peter, ἀποστροφὴ ἀπὸ πονηριῶν,—'a conversion from wickedness.'[r]

10. In analogy and proportion to these repentances and conversions of Jews and Gentiles, the repentances of Christians may be called 'conversion.'[s] We have an instance of the word so used in the case of St. Peter; "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;" that is, When thou art returned from thy folly and sin of denying the Lord, do thou confirm thy brethren, that they may not fall as thou hast done. This is ἀναστροφὴ ἀπὸ ματαίων, ἀπ' ἀδικίας,—'a conversion from vanity, and impiety, or injustice;' when a person of any evil life returns to his duty, and his undertaking in baptism, from the unregenerate to the regenerate estate, that is, from habitual sin to habitual grace. But the repentances of good men for their sins of infirmity, or the seldom interruptions of a good life by single falls, is not properly 'con-

[p] Mark, i. 15. [q] Acts, xxvi. 20; ii. 38; iii. 19.

[r] Acts, xiv. 15; xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 16. Rom. xiii. 12, 13. Eph. v. 8. Tit. ii. 14. Acts, iii. 26.

[s] Luke, xxii. 32. James, iii. 20. Matt. xiii. 15. John, xii. 40.

version.' But as the distance from God is, from whence we are to retire, so is the degree of our conversion. The term *from whence*, is various; but the term *whither* we go, is the same. All must come to God through Jesus Christ in the measures and strictness of the evangelical holiness; which is that state of repentance I have been now describing, which is,—a perfect abrenunciation of all iniquity, and a sincere obedience in the faith of Jesus Christ:—which is the result of all the foregoing considerations and usages of words; and is further manifested in the following appellatives and descriptions, by which repentance is signified and recommended to us in Scripture.

11. I. It is called 'reconciliation,'—καταλλαγή. "We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God;" that is, to be friends with him, no longer to stand in terms of distance; for every habitual sinner, every one that provokes him to anger by his iniquity, is his enemy: not that every sinner hates God by a direct hate; but as obedience is love, so disobedience is enmity or hatred by interpretation, ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς,—"enemies in their mind by wicked works."[t] So St. Paul expresses it: and therefore the reconciling of these is to represent them "holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight."—Pardon of sins is the least part of this reconciliation; our sins and our sinfulness too must be taken away; that is, our old guilt, and the remanent affections must be taken off, before we are friends of God. And therefore we find this reconciliation pressed on our parts; 'we are reconciled to God,' not 'God to us.' For although the term be relative, and so signifies both parts; as conjunction, and friendship, and society, and union do: yet it pleased the Spirit of God by this expression to signify our duty expressly, and to leave the other to be supposed; because if our parts be done, whatsoever is on God's part, can never fail. And, 2. Although this reconciliation begins on God's part, and he first invites us to peace, and gave his Son a sacrifice; yet God's love is very revocable till we are reconciled by obedience and conformity.

12. II. It is called 'renewing,' and that either with the connotation of the subject renewed, or the cause renewing. 'The renewing of the Holy Ghost,' and 'the renewing of the

[t] Col. i. 21, 22.

mind,' or 'the spirit of the mind.'[u] The word is exactly the same with μετάνοια, which is a change of mind from worse to better, as it is distinguished from the fruits and effects of it. So, 'be renewed in your mind;'—that is, throw away all your foolish principles, and nonsense-propositions, by which you use to be tempted and persuaded to sin, and inform your mind with wise notices and sentences of God: "That ye put off concerning the old conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" which is an excellent description of repentance: in which it is observable, that St. Paul uses two words more to express the greatness and nature of this change and conversion. It is,

13. III. "A new creature;—the new man;—created in righteousness:" for the state of repentance is so great an alteration, that in some sense it is greater than the creation;[x] because the things created had in them no opposition to the power of God, but a pure capacity obediential:[y] but a sinner hath dispositions opposite to the Spirit of grace, and he must unlearn much before he can learn any thing; he must die before he can be born.

> Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,
> Continuò hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.[z]

Our sins, the body of sin, the spirit of uncleanness, 'the old man, must be abolished, mortified, crucified, buried;' our sins 'must be laid away,' we must 'hate the garments spotted with the flesh,' and our 'garments must be whitened in the blood of the Lamb;' our 'hearts must be purged from an evil conscience, purified as God is pure,' that is, as St. Paul expresses it, 'from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, denying (or renouncing) all ungodliness and worldly lusts.'[a]

14. And then, as the antithesis or consequent of this is, when we have laid away our sin, and renounced ungodliness; "we must live godly, righteously, and soberly, in this present world;"[b] we must not live either to the world, or to ourselves, but to Christ: "Hic dies aliam vitam adfert, alios mores

[u] Tit. iii. 5. Rom. xii. 2. Eph. iv. 23.
[x] Eph. ii. 10; iii. 9. John, iii. 6.
[y] James, i. 18.
[z] Lucret. i. 671.
[a] Jude. Rev. vii. 14. Heb. x. 22, 23. Psalm l. 9. 2 Cor. vii. 1. 1 John, iii. 3.
[b] Gal. ii. 20.

postulat;"[c] our manner of life must be wholly differing from our former vanities, so that the life which we now live in the flesh, we must live by the faith of the Son of God, that is, according to his laws and most holy discipline.

15. This is pressed earnestly upon us by those many precepts of "obedience to God, to Christ, to the holy Gospel, to the truth, to the doctrine of faith; of doing good, doing righteousness, doing the truth; serving in the newness of the spirit; giving our members up as servants of righteousness unto holiness; being holy in all conversation; following after peace with all men, and holiness; being followers of good works; providing things honest in the sight of God and men; abhorring evil, and cleaving to that which is good; perfecting holiness in the fear of God; to be perfect in every good work, being filled with the fruits of righteousness; walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; abounding in the work of the Lord."[d] Τέλειοι and πεπληρωμένοι are the words often used, 'filled full, and perfect.'

16. To the same purpose is it that we are commanded to "live in Christ, and unto God;"[e] that is, to live according to their will, and by their rule, and to their glory, and in their fear and love; called by St. Paul, "to live in the faith of the Son of God: to be followers of Christ and of God; to dwell in Christ, and to abide in him; to walk according to the commandments of God, in good works, in truth, according to the Spirit; to walk in light, to walk with God;"[f] which was said of Enoch: of whom the Greek LXX., read εὐηρέστησε τῷ Θεῷ,—"he pleased God." There are very many more to the same purpose. For with great caution and earnestness the Holy Scriptures placed the duties of mankind in practice and holiness of living, and removes it far from a confidence of notion and speculation. "Qui fecerit, et docuerit,—'He that doeth them, and teaches them,' shall be great in the kingdom;"[g] and, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things I say to you?[h] and, "Ye are my friends, if ye do

[c] Andr. i. 2. 15.

[d] Rom. vi. 17. Acts, vi. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 3. Eph. ii. 3. James, i. 22, 23. 1 John, iii. 22. John, iii. 4. 1 John, i. 6. 2 Cor. viii. 21. Col. i. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

[e] 2 Tim. iii. 12. [f] Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. ii. 1. 1 Thess. i. 6. John, ii. 6. Eph. ii. 10.

[g] Matt. v. 19. [h] Luke, vi. 46.

what I command you."[i] Πρέπον οὖν μὴ μόνον καλεῖσθαι Χριστιανούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ τὸ λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι μακάριον ποιεῖ.—"We must not only be called Christians, but be so; for not to be called, but to be so, brings us to felicity;" that is, since the life of a Christian is the life of repentance, whose work it is for ever to contend against sin, for ever to strive to please God, a dying to sin, a living to Christ,—he that thinks his repentance can have another definition, or is completed in any other or in fewer parts, must be of another religion than is taught by Christ and his holy apostles. This is the faith of the Son of God, this is that state of excellent things which he purchased with his blood: and as 'there is no other name under heaven,' so there is no other faith, no other repentance, 'whereby we can be saved.'

Upon this article it is usual to discourse of sorrow and contrition, of confession of sins, of making amends, of self-affliction, and some other particulars: but because they are not parts, but actions, fruits, and significations of repentance, I have reserved them for their proper place. Now I am to apply this general doctrine to particular states of sin and sinners in the following chapters.

SECTION III.

Descriptions of Repentance taken from the Holy Scriptures.

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee: if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin when thou afflictest them: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.[l]

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the

[i] John, xv. 14. [k] Ignat. ad Magnes. [l] 1 Kings, viii. 35, 36.

mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.[m]

Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right: if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall even live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.[n]

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.[o]

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.[p]

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the

[m] Isa. lix. 20, 21.
[n] Ezek. xxxiii. 14–16.
[o] Rom. vi. 6. 11–13, 18, 19.
[p] Rom. vii. 4–6.

day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.[q]

Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge? In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.[r]

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.[s]

That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.[t]

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord: and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.[u]

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ

[q] Rom. xiii. 11–13. [r] 2 Cor. vii. 1, 10, 11. [s] 2 Cor. v. 15, 17.
[t] Ephes. iv. 22–24. [u] Ephes. v. 6–11, 15–17.

in God. Mortify therefore your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. But now, ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.[x]

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.[y]

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.[z]

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your ownselves.[a]

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to

[x] Col. iii. 1–3, 5, 8–10.
[y] Titus, ii. 11–14.
[z] Heb. xii. 1, 2, 14, 15.
[a] James, i. 18, 21, 22.

patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.[b]

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.[c]

Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.[d]

The indispensable Necessity of a good Life, represented in the following Scriptures.

Whosoever breaketh one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.[e]

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?[f]

Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.[g]

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God.[h]

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation

[b] 2 Pet. i. 4–9. [c] 1 Pet. i. 13–16. [d] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [e] Matt. v. 19. [f] Luke, vi. 46. [g] John, xv. 14. [h] Rom. xii. 1, 2.

and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.[i]

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.[k]

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.[l]

For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.[m]

For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.[n]

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.[o]

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.[p]

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.[q]

As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children); that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.[r]

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?[s]

And having a High-Priest over the house of God, let us

[i] Rom. ii. 6–9. [k] 1 Cor. vii. 19. [l] 1 Cor. xv. 58. [m] Gal. vi. 15.
[n] Gal. v. 6. [o] Eph. ii. 10. [p] Phil. i. 9–11.
[q] 1 Thess. iv. 1–3. [r] 1 Thess. ii. 11–13. [s] Heb. ix. 14.

draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water: let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised). And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?[t]

For the time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?[u]

And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.[x]

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.[y]

A Penitential Psalm, collected out of the Psalms and Prophets.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them;

In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

[t] Heb. x. 21–29.
[u] 1 Pet. iv. 17.
[x] 1 John, iii. 3, 22.
[y] Apoc. ii. 26.

Our feet have run to evil, our thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. The way of peace we have not known: we have made us crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace.

Therefore do we wait for light, but behold obscurity: for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained?

We are indeed as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags: and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord; neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are thy people. Thou, O Lord, art our Redeemer: thy name is from everlasting.

O Lord, Father and governor of my whole life, leave me not to the sinful counsels of my own heart, and let me not any more fall by them. Set scourges over my thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over my heart, lest my ignorances increase, and my sins abound to my destruction.

O Lord, Father and God of my life, give me not a proud look, but turn away from thy servant always a haughty mind.

Turn away from me vain hopes and concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him up that is always desirous to serve thee.

Let not the greediness of the belly, nor the lust of the flesh, take hold of me: and give not thy servant over to an impudent mind.

There is a word that is clothed about with death: God grant it be not found in the portion of thy servant. For all such things shall be far from the godly, and they shall not wallow in their sins.

Though my sins be as scarlet, yet make them white as snow: though they be red like crimson, let them be as wool.

For I am ashamed of the sins I have desired, and am confounded for the pleasures that I have chosen.

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measures of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am, and that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

For innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: for they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.

But thou, O Lord, though mine iniquities testify against me, save me for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned grievously against thee.

But the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? The Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? I will trust in the Lord, and stay upon my God.

O let me have this of thine hand, that I may not lie down in sorrow.

St. Paul's Prayer for a holy Life.

I.

I BOW my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant unto me according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love, I may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and may be filled with all the fulness of God, through the same our most blessed Saviour Jesus. Amen.[z]

[z] Eph. iii. 14, &c.

The Doxology.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us: unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

II.

O most gracious God, grant to thy servant to be filled with the knowledge of thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, to be fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthen me, O God, with all might, according to thy glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness: so shall I give thanks unto the Father, who hath made me meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.[a]

III.

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect what is lacking in my faith, direct my way unto him, make me to increase and abound in love towards all men, and establish my heart unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.[b]

IV.

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me perfect in every good work to do his will, working in me what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.[c]

A Penitential Prayer.

I.

O ETERNAL God, most merciful Father, who hast revealed thyself to mankind in Christ Jesus, full of pity and compassion, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

[a] Col. i. 9, &c. [b] 1 Thess. iii. 11, 12. [c] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

iniquity, and transgression, and sin; be pleased to effect these thy admirable mercies upon thy servant, whom thou hast made to put his trust in thee. I know, O God, that I am vile and polluted in thy sight; but I must come into thy presence, or I die. Thou canst not behold any unclean thing, and yet, unless thou lookest upon me, who am nothing but uncleanness, I shall perish miserably and eternally. O look upon me with a gracious eye; cleanse my soul with the blood of the holy Lamb; that being purified in that holy stream, my sins may lose their own foulness, and become white as snow: then shall the leprous man be admitted to thy sanctuary, and stand before the throne of grace, humble and full of sorrow for my fault, and full of hope of thy mercy and pardon, through Jesus Christ.

II.

O my God, thou wert reconciled to mankind by thy own graciousness and glorious goodness, even when thou didst find out so mysterious ways of redemption for us by sending Jesus Christ; then thou didst love us, and that holy Lamb did, from the beginning of the world, lie before thee as sacrificed and bleeding; and in the fulness of time he came to actuate and exhibit what thy goodness had designed and wrought in the counsels of eternity. But now, O gracious Father, let me also be reconciled to thee; for we continued enemies to thee, though thou lovedst us; let me no longer stand at a distance from thee, but run unto thee, bowing my will, and submitting my understanding, and mortifying my affections, and resigning all my powers and faculties to thy holy laws, that thou mayest take delight to pardon and to sanctify, to assist thy servant with thy grace, till by so excellent conduct, and so unspeakable mercy, I shall arrive to the state of glory.

III.

O blessed Saviour, Jesus, thou hast made thyself a blessed peace-offering for sins, thou hast procured and revealed to us this covenant of repentance and remission of sins; and by the infinite mercies of the Father, and the death and intercession of the Son, we stand fair and hopeful in the eye of the Divine compassion, and we have hopes of being saved. O be pleased to work thy own work in us. The grace and

admission to repentance is thy own glorious production, thou hast obtained it for us with a mighty purchase: but then be pleased also to take me in, to partake actually of this glorious mercy. Give to thy servant a perfect hatred of sin, a great displeasure at my own folly for ever having provoked thee to anger; a perpetual watchfulness against it, an effective resolution against all its tempting instances, a prevailing strife and a glorious victory; that the body of sin being destroyed, I may never any more serve any of its baser interests; but that, by a diligent labour, and a constant care, I may approve myself to thee my God, mindful of thy covenant, a servant of thy will, a lover of thy glory; that being thy minister in a holy service, I may be thy son by adoption and participation of the glories of the Lord Jesus. O let me never lie down in sin, nor rise in shame; but be partaker both of the death and the resurrection of our Lord; that my imperfect and unworthy services may, by passing into the holiness of thy kingdom, be such as thy servant desires they should, and fit to be presented unto thee in the perfect holiness of eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DISTINCTION OF SINS, MORTAL AND VENIAL, IN WHAT SENSE TO BE ADMITTED; AND HOW THE SMALLEST SINS ARE TO BE REPENTED OF AND EXPIATED.

SECTION I.

Men have not been satisfied with devising infinite retirements and disguises of their follies to hide them from the world; but, finding themselves open and discerned by God, have endeavoured to discover means of escaping from that eye, from which nothing can escape but innocence, and from which nothing can be hid, but under the cover of mercy. For besides that we expound the Divine laws to our own purposes of ease and ambition, we give to our sins gentle censures, and adorn them with good words, and refuse to load them with their proper characters and punishments; and at

last are come to that state of things, that since we cannot allow to ourselves a liberty of doing every sin, we have distinguished the question of sins into several orders, and have taken one half to ourselves. For we have found rest to our fancies in the permissions of one whole kind, having distinguished sins into 'mortal' and 'venial' in their own nature; that is, sins which may, and sins which may not, be done, without danger; so that all the difference is, that some sins must be taken heed of, but others there are, and they the most in number, and the most frequent in their instances and returns, which we have leave to commit, without being affrighted with the fearful noises of damnation; by which doctrine, iniquity and confidence have much increased and grown upon the ruins and declension of the Spirit.

2. And this one article hath almost an infinite influence to the disparagement of religion in the determination of cases of conscience. For supposing the distinction to be believed, experience and certain reason will evince, that it is impossible to prescribe proper limits and measures to the several kinds; and between the least mortal, and the greatest venial sin, no man is able with certainty to distinguish: and therefore (as we see it daily happen, and in every page written by the casuists) men call what they please venial, take what measures of them they like, appoint what expiation of them they fancy, and consequently give what allowance they list to those whom they please to mislead. For in innumerable cases of conscience it is oftener required, whether a thing be venial or mortal, than whether it be lawful or not lawful; and as purgatory is to hell, so venial is to sin, a thing which men fear not, because the main stake they think to be secured: for if they may have heaven at last, they care not what comes between. And as many men of the Roman persuasion will rather choose purgatory than suffer here an inconsiderable penance, or do those little services which themselves think will prevent it; so they choose venial sins, and hug the pleasures of trifles, warming themselves at fantastic fires, and dancing in the light of the glow-worms; and they love them so well, that rather than quit those little things, they will suffer the intolerable pains of a temporary hell; for so they believe: which is the testimony of a great evil and a mighty danger; for it gives testimony, that little sins can be

beloved passionately, and therefore can minister such a delight as is thought a price great enough to pay for the sufferance of temporal evils, and purgatory itself.

3. But the evil is worse yet, when it is reduced to practice. For in the decision of very many questions, the answer is, It is a venial sin; that is, though it be a sin, yet there is in it no danger of losing the favour of God by that, but you may do it, and you may do it again a thousand thousand times; and "all the venial sins of the world put together, can never do what one mortal sin can, that is, make God to be your enemy:" so Bellarmine expressly affirms.[d] But because there are many doctors who write cases of conscience, and there is no measure to limit the parts of this distinction (for that which is not at all, cannot be measured), the doctors differ infinitely in their sentences; some calling that mortal which others call venial (as you may see in the little summaries of Navarre and Emanuel Sà); the poor souls of the laity, and the vulgar clergy who believe what is told them by the authors or confessors they choose to follow, must needs be in infinite danger, and the whole body of practical divinity, in which the life of religion and of all our hopes depends, shall be rendered dangerous and uncertain, and their confidence shall betray them unto death.

4. To bring relief to this state of evil, and to establish aright the proper grounds and measures of repentance; I shall first account concerning the difference of sins, and by what measures they are so differenced. 2. That all sins are of their own nature punishable as God please, even with the highest expressions of his anger. 3. By what repentance they are cured, and pardoned respectively.

SECTION II.

Of the Difference of Sins, and their Measures.

5. I. Sins are not equal, but greater or less in their principle as well as in their event. It was one of the errors of

[d] Lib. i. de Amiss. Gratiæ, cap. 13. sect. alterum est.

Jovinian, which he learned from the school of the Stoics, that all sins are alike grievous.

> ——— Cum dicas esse pares res
> Furta latrociniis, et magnis parva mineris.
> Falce recisurum simili te, si tibi regnum
> Permittant homines.[e]

For they supposed an absolute irresistible fate to be the cause of all things; and therefore what was equally necessary, was equally culpable, that is, not at all: and where men have no power of choice, or (which is all one) that it be necessary that they choose what they do, there can be no such thing as laws, or sins against them. To which they adding that all evils are indifferent, and the event of things, be it good or bad, had no influence upon the felicity or infelicity of man, they could neither be differenced by their cause, or by their effect; the first being necessary, and the latter indifferent. Against this I shall not need to oppose many arguments; for though this follows most certainly from their doctrine, who teach an irresistible decree of God to be the cause of all things and actions; yet they that own the doctrine disavow the consequent; and in that are good Christians, but ill logicians. But the article is sufficiently cleared by the words of our blessed Lord in the case of Judas, whose sin (as Christ told Pilate) was 'the greater,' because he had not power over him but by special concession; in the case of 'the servant that knows his master's will, and does it not;'[f] in the several condemnations of the degrees[g] and expressions of anger in the instances of Raca, and Μῶρε,—'Thou vain man,' or 'Thou fool:' by this, comparing some sins to gnats, and some to camels: and in proportion to these, there are πολλαὶ πληγαὶ in St. Luke, 'many stripes;' a μεῖζον κρῖμα in St. James, 'a greater condemnation.' Thus to rob a church is a greater sin than to rob a thief; to strike a father is a higher impiety than to resist a tutor; to oppress a widow is clamorous, and calls aloud for vengeance, when a less repentance will vote down the whispering murmurs of a trifling injury, done to a fortune that is not sensible of smaller diminutions.

[e] Hor. Serm. lib. i. sat. 3. 121.
[f] Matt. xxiii. 24. Luke, vi. 41.
[g] Ira festuca est: odium verò trabs.—*Aug.*

Nec vincet ratio hoc, tantundem ut peccet idemque
Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,
Et qui nocturnus Divûm sacra legerit.

He is a greater criminal that steals the chalice from a church, than he that takes a few coleworts, or robs a garden of cucumbers. But this distinction and difference is by something that is extrinsical to the action, the greatness of the mischief, or the dignity of the person; according to that,

Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se
Crimen habet, quanto major, qui peccat habetur.[h]

6. II. But this, when it is reduced to its proper cause, is, because such greater sins are complicated; they are commonly two or three sins wrapped together, as the unchastity of a priest is uncleanness and scandal too: adultery is worse than fornication, because it is unchastity and injustice, and by the fearful consequents of it is mischievous and uncharitable.

Et quas Euphrates, et quas mihi misit Orontes,
Me capiant; Nolo furta pudica tori.

So sacrilege is theft and impiety. And Apicius killing himself, when he supposed his estate would not maintain his luxury, was not only a self-murderer, but a gluttonous person in his death:

Nil est, Apici, te gulosius factum.[i]

So that the greatness of sins is, in most instances, by extension and accumulation; that as he is a greater sinner who sins often in the same instance, than he that sins seldom; so is he who sins such sins as are complicated and entangled, like the twinings of combining serpents. And this appears to be so, because if we take single sins, as uncleanness and theft, no man can tell which is the greater sin; neither can they be differenced but by something that is besides the nature of the action itself. A thought of theft, and an unclean thought, have nothing by which they can excel each other; but when you clothe them with the dress of active circumstances, they grow greater or less respectively; because then two or three sins are put together, and get a new name.

7. III. There is but one way more, by which sins can

[h] Juv. viii. 140. [i] Mart. iii. 22. 5.

get or lose degrees, and that is the different proportions of our affections. This indeed relates to God more immediately, and by him alone is judged; but the former being invested with material circumstances, can be judged by men: but all that God reserves for his own portion of the sacrifice, is the heart; that is, our love and choice; and therefore the degrees of love or hatred, is that measure by which God makes differing judgments of them. For by this it is, that little sins become great, and great sins become little. If a Jew had maliciously touched a dead body in the days of Easter, it had been a greater crime than if in the violence of his temptation he had unwillingly willed to commit an act of fornication. He that delights in little thefts, because they are breaches of God's laws, or burns a prayer-book, because he hates religion, is a greater criminal than he that falls into a material heresy by an invisible or less discerned deception: secure but to God your affections, and he will secure your innocence or pardon; for men live or die by their own measures. If a man spits in the face of a priest to defy religion, or shaves the beard of an ambassador to disgrace the prince (as it happened to David's messengers), his sin is greater than if he killed the priest in his own just defence, or shot the ambassador through the heart, when he intended to strike a lion. For every negligence, every disobedience, being against charity or the love of God by interpretation; this superaddition of direct malice is open enmity against him; and therefore is more severely condemned by him who sees every thought, and degrees of passion and affection. For the increase of malice does aggravate the sin, just as the complication of material instances. Every degree of malice being as distinct and commensurate a sin, as any one external instance that hath a name; and therefore many degrees of malice combine and grow greater as many sins conjoined in one action, they differ only in nature, not in morality; just as a great number and a great weight: so that, in effect, all sins are differenced by complication only, that is, either of the external or the internal instances.

8. IV. Though the negligence or the malice be naturally equal, yet sometimes by accident the sins may be unequal, not only in the account of men, but also before God too;—but it is upon the account of both the former. It is when

the material effect being different upon men, God hath with greater caution secured such interests. So that by interpretation the negligence is greater, because the care was with greater earnestness commanded: or else because in such cases the sin is complicated: for such sins which do most mischief, have, besides their proper malignity, the evil of uncharitableness, or hating our brother. In some cases God requires one hand, and in others both. Now he that puts but one of his fingers to each of them, his negligence is in nature the same, but not in value; because where more is required, the defect was greater. If a man be equally careless of the life of his neighbour's son, and his neighbour's cock, although the will or attendance to the action be naturally equal, that is, none at all, yet morally, and in the Divine account, they differ, because the proportions of duty and obligation were different, and therefore more ought to have been put upon the one than upon the other: just as he is equally clothed that wears a single garment in summer and winter, but he is not equally warm, unless he, that wears a silk mantle when the dog-star rages, claps on furs when the cold north-star changes the waters into rocks.

9. V. Single sins, done with equal affection or disaffection, do not differ in degrees as they relate to God, but in themselves are equally prevarications of the Divine commandment. As he tells a lie that says the moon is four-square, as great as he that says there were but three apostles, or that Christ was not the Son of Man: and as every lie is an equal sin against truth,[k] so every sin is an equal disobedience and recession from the rule. But some lies are more against charity, or justice, or religion, than others are, and so are greater by complication; but against truth they are all equally opposed: and so are all sins contrary to the commandment. And in this sense is that saying[l] of St. Basil: "Primò enim scire illud convenit, differentiam minorum et majorum nusquam in Novo Testamento reperiri. Siquidem una est et eadem sententia adversus quælibet peccata, cum Dominus dixerit, 'Qui facit peccatum, servus est

[k] Nihil invenies rectius recto, non magis quàm verius vero, quàm temperato temperatius; omnis in modo est virtus: modus certa mensura est. Constantia non habet quò procedat, non magis quàm fiducia, aut veritas, aut fides.—*Sen.*

[l] In Regul. Brevior.

peccati:' et item, 'Sermo quem loquutus sum vobis, ille judicabit eum in novissimo die:' et Johannes vociferans dicat, 'Qui contumax est in filium, non videbit vitam æternam; sed ira Dei manet super eum:' cum contumacia non in discrimine peccatorum, sed in violatione præcepti positam habeat futuri supplicii denunciationem:—The difference of great and little sins is nowhere to be found in the New Testament. One and the same sentence is against all sins; our Lord saying, 'He that doth sin, is the servant of sin;' and, 'The word that I have spoken, that shall judge you in the last day;' and John crieth out, saying, 'He that is disobedient to the Son, shall not see eternal life, but the wrath of God abideth on him:' for this contumacy or disobedience does not consist in the difference of sins, but in the violation of the Divine law; and for that it is threatened with eternal pain." But besides these arguments from Scripture, he adds an excellent reason: "Prorsus autem si id nobis permittitur, ut in peccatis hoc magnum, illud exiguum appellemus, invicto argumento concluditur magnum unicuique esse illud, a quo quisque superatur: contraque exiguum, quod unusquisque ipse superat. Ut, in athletis, qui vicit fortis est; qui autem victus est, imbecillior eo unde victus est, quisque ille sit:—If it be permitted that men shall call this sin great, and that sin little; they will conclude that to be great which was too strong for them; and that to be little which they can master. As among champions, he is the strongest that gets the victory." And then, upon this account, no sin is venial that a man commits; because that is it which hath prevailed upon, and mastered all his strengths.

10. The instance is great whatsoever it be that God hath chosen for our obedience. To abstain from the fruit of a tree, not to gather sticks or dew after a certain hour, not to touch the curtains of the ark, not to uncover our father's shame, all is one as to God; for there is nothing in all our duty that can add any moments to his felicity, but by what he please he is to try our obedience. Let no man, therefore, despise a sin, or be bold to plead for it, as Lot for Zoar; "Is it not a little one?" For no man can say it is little, if God hath chosen the commandment which the sin transgresses, as an instrument of his glorification and our

felicity. Disobedience is the formality of sin; and since the instance or the matter of sin is all one to God, so also is the disobedience. The result of this consideration is this: 1. That no man should indulge to himself the smallest sin, because it is equally against God as the greatest: and though accidentally it may come not to be so exacted, yet of itself it may, and God is just if he does. 2. There is no sin, but if God enters into judgment with us, he may justly sentence us for it to the portion of accursed spirits. For if for any, then for all, there being (as to him) no difference. But these things are to be proved in the following section.

SECTION III.

That all Sins are punishable as God please, even with the Pains of Hell.

11. I. In the aggravation of sins, the injured person is as considerable as any other circumstance. He that smites a prince, he that fires a temple, he that rails upon the Bible, he that pollutes the sacraments, makes every sin to be a load: and, therefore, since every since is against God, it ought not to be called little, unless God himself should be little esteemed. And since men usually give this account, that God punishes a transient sin with an immortal pain, because though the action is finite, yet it was against an infinite God; we may, upon the same ground, esteem it just that, even for the smallest sin, God, in the rigour of his justice, can exact the biggest calamity. For an act of murder, or a whole year of adultery, hath no nearer proportion to an eternity of pains, than one sinful thought hath: for greater or less are no approaches towards infinite; for between them both, and what is infinite, the distance is equally infinite.

12. II. In the distinction of sins, mortal and venial, the doctors of the Roman Church define venial sins to be such which can consist with the love of God, which never destroy or lessen it,[m] in the very definition, supposing that thing which is most of all in question; and the ground of the

[m] Venialia peccata, ex consensu omnium theologorum, neque tollunt neque minuunt habitum caritatis, sed solum actum et fervorem ejus impediunt.—*Bellarm. de Amiss. Grat.* c. xiii. sect. alterum est.

definition is nothing but the analogy and proportion of the intercourses and usages of men, who for a small offence do not neglect or cast away the endearments of an old friend:[n] of which when I have given account, I suppose the greatest difficulty of the question is removed. Against this, therefore, I oppose this proposition,—the smallest sins are destructive of our friendship with God. For although God's mercies are infinite and glorious, and he forgives millions to us that grudge to remit the trifles of our brother; and therefore, whatsoever we can suppose a man will forgive to his friend, that and much more, infinitely more, may we expect from the treasures of his goodness and mercy; yet our present consideration is, not what we can expect from God's mercy, but what is the just demerit of our sins; not what he will forgive, but what he may justly exact; not what are the measures of pardon, but what are the accounts of his justice: for though we have hopes upon other reckonings, yet upon the account even of our smallest sins, we have nothing but fear and sadder expectations. For we are not to account the measures and rules of our friendship with God, by the easiness and ignorance, by the necessities and usual compliances of men. For,

13. I. Certain it is, that in the usual accounts of men some things are permitted, which are not so in the accounts of God. All sorts of ignorance use to lessen a fault amongst men, but before God some sorts of ignorance do aggravate; such as is the voluntary and malicious, which is the worst sort of vincible. Not that men do not esteem him vicious and unworthy who inquires not for fear he should know, but because men oftentimes are not competent judges whether they do or no.

14. II. Because men know not by what purpose their neighbours' action is directed, and therefore reckon only by the next and most apparent cause, not by the secret and most operative and effective.

15. III. Because by the laws of charity we are bound to think the best, to expound things fairly, to take up things by the easier handle; there being left for us no other security of not being confounded by mutual censures, judgments, and inflictions, but by being restrained on the surer side of charity,

[n] Bellarm. de Amiss. Grat. c. xi. sect. quartum argum.

on which the errors of men are not judged criminal and mischievous, as on the other side they are. But God knows the hearts of men, their little obliquities and intricate turnings, every propensity and secret purpose, what malice is ingredient, and what error is invincible, and how much is fit to be pitied, and therefore what may justly be exacted. For there are three several ways of judgment, according to the several capacities of the judges. First, the laws of men judge only by the event, or material action, and meddle not at all with the purpose, but where it is opened by an active sign. He that gives me a thousand pounds to upbraid my poverty, or with a purpose to feed my crimes, is not punishable by law,—but he that takes from me a thousand shillings, though secretly he means to give it to my needy brother. Because as in the estimation of men nothing is valuable but what does them good or hurt; so neither can their laws and tribunals receive testimony of any thing but what is seen or felt. And thus it is also in the measures of sins. To break order in a day of battle, is but a disorder; and so it is to break order at St. George's show, at a training, or in a procession; and yet that is punished with death, this with a cudgel; the aptness to mischief, and the evil consequent, being in human judicatories the only measures of judgment: men feel the effects, and the laws do judge accordingly. 2. In the private judgments of men, mercy must interpose; and it can oftener than in the public: because in the private intercourses of men, there is a sense, and can be a consideration of particulars, and little accidents and significations of things, and some purposes may be privately discerned, which cannot publicly be proved. He that went to help his friend out of a river, and pulled his arm out of joint, was excused by the wronged preserved person: the evil accident was taken off by the pious purpose: but he that, to dishonour his friend, throws a glass of wine in his face, and says he did it in sport, may be judged by his purpose, not by his pretence; because the pretence can be confuted by the observation of little circumstances and adherences of the action, which yet peradventure cannot legally be proved. "Alitèr leges, alitèr philosophi tollunt astutias: leges, quatenus tenere manu res possunt; philosophi, quatenus ratione et intelligentiâ: — Laws regard the great materialities of obedience, the real, sensible effect.

But wise men, philosophers, and private judges, take in the accounts ofaccidental moments and incidences to the actions," said Cicero.° But, 3. God's judgment is otherwise yet; for he alone can tell the affection, and all that which had secret influence into the event: and therefore he can judge by what is secret, by the purpose and heart, which is indeed the only way of doing exact justice. From hence it follows, that what ought not to dissolve the friendship of man, may yet justly dissolve our friendship with God, for he takes other measures than men may or can.

16. IV. Because offences against God may be avoided; but it is not so in our intercourses with men; for God hath told us plainly what is our duty, what he expects, what will please and what will displease him: but men are often governed by chance; and that which pleases them to-day, shall provoke them to-morrow; and the next day you shall be their enemy, for that for which, three days ago, they paid you thanks.

17. V. If men exact little things, it becomes their own case; for we sin against our brother and need his pardon: and therefore

Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim;

We give and ask pardon;

Det ille veniam facilè, cui veniâ est opus:

But we never found iniquity in God, or injustice in the Most High, and therefore he that is innocent may throw a stone at the criminal.

18. VI. God hath in the smallest instance left us without excuse; for he hath often warned us of small offences. He hath told us their danger. 'He that despiseth little things, shall perish by little and little.' He hath told us, they asperse us with a mighty guilt; 'for he that offends in one commandment, is guilty of all.' He hath told us, that we are not certainly excused, though our conscience do not manifestly accuse us; for so St. Paul; "I am not hereby justified, for God is greater than my conscience." He hath threatened loss of heaven to him that is guilty of the breach of one, κἂν ἐλαχίστων,—"though of the least of these commandments" (τούτων, 'these' which Christ hath reckoned in his sermon, where fetters are laid upon thoughts and words),

° Offic. lib. iii.

" shall be called the least in the kingdom," that is, he shall be quite shut out: for 'minimus' here is as much as 'nullus;' 'minimus vocabitur,' that is, 'minimi æstimabitur,—he shall not be esteemed at all' in the accounts of doomsday mercy, ἐν τῇ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἀποκαταστάσει, ἐν ᾗ γίνεται κολαζομένων τε καὶ δοξαζομένων ἡ διαίρεσις, in the accounts of the doomsday book, " where there shall be a discerning of them who shall be glorified, from them that are to be punished."[p] And this, which is one of the severest periods of Holy Scripture, can by no arts be turned aside from concluding fully in this question. Bellarmine[q] says it means only to condemn those, who by false doctrines corrupt these severe precepts, and teach men as the Pharisees did of old; not all those who break them themselves, if they teach others to keep them. " He that breaks one of these, and shall teach men so to do;" so are the words of Christ. But it is a known thing that καὶ is oftentimes used for ἤ; " He that breaks one of these, *or* shall teach others." The words were spoken to the persons of the apostles, who were to teach these doctrines κατ' ἐπίτασιν, 'exactly as Christ preached them;' but without peradventure they were also intended to all the Church: and the following words, and the whole analogy of the adjoined discourse, make it clear to every observing reader; and the words plainly say this, 'He that shall break one of these least commandments,' and 'He that shall teach men so,' each of them 'shall be called the least in the kingdom.' —But, 2. Why did our blessed Lord so severely threaten those that should teach others to break any of these severe commandments by false interpretation, but only because it was so necessary for all to keep them in the true sense, and so fearful a thing to any to break them? 3. Those who preach severe doctrines to others, and touch them not with one of their fingers, are guilty of that which Christ reproved in the Pharisees; and themselves shall be castaways, while they preach to others: so that the breaking it by disobedience is damnable, as well as the breaking it by false interpretation:

> Odi homines ignavâ operâ, philosophâ sententiâ,
> Qui sibi semitam non sapiunt, alteri monstrant viam.[r]

Indeed it is intolerable to teach men to be vicious; but it is

[p] In Resp. ad Orthod. apud Justin.
[q] De Amiss. Grat. c. xii. sect. Restat ultim.
[r] Pacuvius ap. Cic. de Divin. 1. 58. Davis.

a hateful baseness to shew others that way which ourselves refuse to walk in. Whatever therefore may not be allowed to be taught, may not also be done; for the people are not to be taught evil, because they must not do evil; but may the teachers do what they may not teach, and what the people may not do, or is not the same punishment to them both? 4. Now upon these grounds, this very gloss which Bellarmine gives, being a false interpretation of these words of Christ (which are a summary of his whole sermon, and as it were the sanction and establishment of the former and following periods into laws), must needs be of infinite danger to the inventor and followers of it: for this gloss gives leave to men to break the least of these commandments, "some way or other (if they do not teach others so to do)" without being affrighted with the fears of hell; but in the meanwhile this gloss teaches, or gives leave to others to break them, but allows no false interpretation of them but its own. 5. But then it is worse with them who 'teach others so to do,' and command all men to teach so; and if the Roman doctors who teach that some breach of these commandments is not of its own nature, and by the Divine threatenings, exclusive of the transgressors from the kingdom of God,—be not in some sense a teaching men so to do, then nothing is: for when God said to Adam, "That day thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die;" the tempter said, "Nay, but ye shall not die;" and so was author to Adam of committing his sin. So when our blessed Saviour hath told us, that to break one of these least commandments is exclusive of us from heaven, they that say, that not every solution or breaking of them is exclusive from heaven (which are the words of Bellarmine, and the doctrine of the Roman Church), must even by the consequence of this very gloss of his, fall under the danger of διδάξοντες, of the false teachers, or the breakers of them by false interpretation. However, fearful is the malediction, even to the breakers of the least: ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται, that is, ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ἔσχατος καὶ ἀπερίμμενος εἰς γέενναν (that I may use the words of Theophylact), "He shall be last in the resurrection, and shall be thrown into hell:" for that is the meaning of "least in the kingdom of heaven:" "et fortasse ideo non erit in regno cœlorum, ubi nisi magni esse non possunt," said St. Austin; 'least' is 'none at all;' "for into heaven none can enter, but they which are great in God's account."

19. VII. Lastly, God hath given us the perpetual assistances of his Spirit, the presence of his grace, the ministry of his word, the fear of judgments, the endearment of his mercies, the admonition of friends, the severity of preachers, the aid of books, the apprehension of death, the sense of our daily dangers, our continual necessities, and the recollection of our prayers, and, above all, he hath promised heaven to the obedient, which is a state of blessings so great and infinite, as upon the account of them, it is infinitely reasonable and just, if he shall exact of us every sin, that is, every thing which we can avoid.

20. Upon this account it is, that although wise and prudent men do not despise the continual endearments of an old friend, yet, in many cases, God may and doth ; and from the rules and proper measures of human friendship, to argue up to a presumption of God's easiness in not exacting our duty, is a fallacious proceeding, but it will deceive nobody but ourselves.

21. I. Every sin is directly against God's law ; and, therefore, is damnable and deadly in the accounts of the Divine justice, one as well, though not so grievously, as another. For though sins be differenced by greater and less, yet their proportion to punishment is not differenced by temporal and eternal, but by greater and less in that kind which God hath threatened. So Origen.[s] " Unusquisque, pro qualitate et quantitate peccati, diversam mulctæ sententiam expendit. Si parum est quod peccas, ferieris damno minuti, ut Lucas scripsit,—ut verò Matthæus, quadrantis. Veruntamen necesse est hoc ipsum, quod exstitisti debitor, solvere. Non enim inde exibis, nisi et minima quæque persolveris ;—Every one, according to the quantity and quality of his sin, must pay his fine ;" but till he hath paid he shall not be loosed from those fearful prisons ; that is, he shall never be loosed, if he agree not before he comes thither. The smallest offence is a sin, and, therefore, it is *ἀνομία*,—' a transgression of the law,' a violation of that band by which our obedience unites us unto God. And this the Holy Scripture signifies unto us in various expressions. For though the several words are variously used in sacred and profane writers, yet all of them signify that even the smallest sin is a

[s] Homil. 35. 12. Lucam.

prevarication of the holy laws; *τῆς ἐντολῆς παράβασις*, so Damascen[t] calls sin; which we render well by 'transgression:' and even those words which in distinction signify a small offence, yet they also signify the same with the greater words, to shew that they all have the same formality, and do the same displeasure, or at least that by the difference of the words no difference of their natures can be regularly observed. Sins against God only are by Phavorinus called *ἁμαρτίαι*. *Ἐξήμαρτε εἰς Θεὸν, ἐξύβρισεν εἰς ἀνθρώπους*· and the same word is also used for sin against our neighbours; *ἐὰν ἁμαρτήσῃ εἰς σὲ ἀδελφὸς*,—'if thy brother sin against thee,' that is, 'do thee injury;' and this is properly *ἀδικία*,—'injustice;' but Demosthenes[u] distinguishes injustice from sin, *ἀδικία* from *ἁμαρτία*, by voluntary and involuntary; *ἀδικεῖ τις ἑκών· ἐξήμαρτέ τις ἄκων*· —"He that does wrong willingly, is unjust; he that does it unwillingly, is a sinner."

22. The same indistinction is observable in the other words of Scripture; *παράπτωμα* is by St. Jerome used for the beginnings of sin; "Cum cogitatio tacita subrepit, et ex aliquâ parte conniventibus nobis, nec dum tamen nos impulit ad ruinam;" when a sudden thought invades us without our advertency and observation, and hath not brought forth death as yet; and yet that death is appendant to whatsoever it be that can be signified by *παράπτωμα* we may observe, because the sin of Adam[x] that called death upon all the world, is called *παράπτωμα*; and of the Ephesian Gentiles St. Paul said they had been dead *παραπτώμασι καὶ ἁμαρτίαις*,—"in trespasses and sins;" and, therefore, it cannot hence be inferred that such little obliquities, or beginnings of greater sins, are only *παρὰ τὴν νόμον*,—'besides the law,' not against it, for it is (at least the word hinders not but it may be) of the same kind of malignity as was the sin of Adam: and, therefore, St. Austin[z] renders the word *παράπτωμα*, 'delictum,' or 'offence,' and so do our Bibles. And the same also is the case of *ἁμαρτία*, which is attributed even to concupiscence or the beginnings of mischief, by St. Paul[a] and by St. Jerome:[b] but the same is used for the consummation of concupiscence in the matter of uncleanness by St. James;[c] 'lust when it hath con-

[t] *Παράβασις*. lib. iv. de Orthod. Fide, c. 23.
[u] Orat. *περὶ στεφάνου*.
[x] Rom. v. 18.
[y] Eph. ii. 1.'
[z] Lib. iii. quæst. super Levit. q. 20.
[a] Rom. vii. 5.
[b] In c. ii. Ephes.
[c] James, i. 15. Vide Com. DD. in Titum, verb. *ἀνέγκλητος*.

ceived,' τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν; 'peccatum' is the Latin word, which when it is used in a distinct and pressed sense, it is taken for the lesser sins, and is distinguished from 'crimen.' Paulus Orosius[d] uses it to signify only the concupiscence or sinful thoughts of the heart; and when it breaks forth to action, he calls it a crime; "peccatum cogitatio concipit, crimen vero non nisi actus ostendit:" and it was so used by the ancient Latins. 'Peccatus' it was called by them 'quasi pellicatus,' that enticing which is proper to uncleanness. So Cicero in A. Gellius:[e] "Nemo ita manifesto peccatu tenebatur, ut cum impudens fuisset in facto, tum impudentior videretur, si negaret." Thus the indistinction of words mingles all their significations in the same common notion and formality. They were not sins at all, if they were not against a law; and if they be, they cannot be of their own nature venial, but must be liable to that punishment which was threatened in the law whereof that action is a transgression.

23. II. The law of God never threatens, the justice of God never inflicts punishment, but upon transgressors of his laws; the smallest offences are not only threatened, but may be punished with death; therefore, they are transgressions of the Divine law. So St. Basil argues; "Nullum peccatum contemnendum ut parvum, quando D. Paulus de omni peccato generatim pronunciaverat stimulum mortis esse peccatum;" 'the sting of death is sin;' that is, death is the evil consequent of sin, and comes in the tail of it; of every sin, and, therefore, no sin must be despised as if it were little. Now if every little sin hath this sting also (as it is on all hands agreed that it hath), it follows that every little transgression is perfectly and entirely against a commandment. And indeed it is not sense to say any thing can in any sense be a sin, and that it should not in the same sense be against a commandment. For although the particular instance be not named in the law, yet every instance of that matter must be meant. It was an extreme folly in Bellarmine[f] to affirm, "peccatum veniale ex parvitate materiæ est quidem perfectè voluntarium, sed non perfectè contra legem. Lex enim non prohibet furtum unius oboli in specie, sed prohibet furtum in genere:—that a sin that is venial by the smallness of the

[d] Apol. de Liber. Arbit. [e] Lib. xiii. c. 19.
[f] De Amiss. Grat. c. xi. sect. Assumptio probatur.

matter, is not perfectly against the law, because the law forbids theft indeed in the general, but does not in particular forbid the stealing of a halfpenny:" for upon the same reason it is not perfectly against the law to steal three pounds nineteen shillings and three-pence, because the law in general only forbids theft, but does not in particular forbid the stealing of that sum. But what is *besides* the law, and not *against* it, cannot be a sin; and, therefore, to fancy any sin to be only besides the law, is a contradiction; so, to walk, to ride, to eat flesh or herbs, to wear a long or a short garment, are said to be besides the law: but, therefore, they are permitted and indifferent. Indifferent, I say, in respect of that law, which relates to that particular matter, and indifferent in all senses; unless there be some collateral law which may prohibit it indirectly. So for a judge to be a coachman, for a priest to be a fiddler or innkeeper, are not directly unlawful, but indirectly they are, as being against decency and public honesty or reputation, or being inconvenient in order to that end whither their calling is designed. To this sense are those words of St. Paul; "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient;" that is, some things which directly are lawful, by an indirect obligation may become unfit to be done; but otherwise, "Licitum est quod nullâ lege prohibetur," saith the law. If no law forbids it, then it is lawful: and to abstain from what is lawful, though it may have a worthiness in it more than ordinary, yet to use our liberty is at no hand a sin. The issue then is this; either we are forbidden to do a venial sin, or we are not. If we are not forbidden, then it is as lawful to do a venial sin as to marry, or eat flesh: if we are forbidden, then every such action is directly against God's law, and consequently finable at the will of the Supreme Judge, and if he please, punishable with a supreme anger. And to this purpose there is an excellent observation in St. Austin:[g] "Peccatum et delictum si nihil differrent inter se, et si unius rei duo nomina essent, non curaret Scriptura tam diligenter unum esse utriusque sacrificium:—There are several names in Scripture to signify our wanderings, and to represent the several degrees of sin; but carefully it is provided for, that they should be expiated with the same sacrifice;" which

[g] Lib. iii. quæst. super Levit. q. 20.

proves that certainly they are prevarications of the same law, offences of the same God, provocations of the same anger, and heirs of the same death; and even for small offences a sacrifice was appointed, lest men should neglect what they think God regarded not.

24. III. Every sin, even the smallest, is against charity, which is the end of the commandment. For every sin or evil of transgression is far worse than all the evils of punishment with which mankind is afflicted in this world; and it is a less evil that all mankind should be destroyed, than that God should be displeased in the least instance that is imaginable. Now if we esteem the loss of our life or our estate, the wounding our head, or the extinction of an eye, to be great evils to us, and him that does any thing of this to us, to be our enemy, or to be injurious, we are to remember that God hates every sin worse than we can hate pain or beggary. And if a nice and a tender conscience, the spirit of every excellent person, does extremely hate all that can provoke God to anger or to jealousy; it must be certain that God hates every such thing with a hatred infinitely greater, so great, that no understanding can perceive the vastness of it and immensity. For by how much every one is better, by so much the more he hates every sin; and the soul of a righteous man is vexed and afflicted with the inroads of his unavoidable calamities, the armies of Egypt, the lice and flies, his insinuating, creeping infirmities. Now if it be holiness in him to hate these little sins, it is an imitation of God; for what is in us by derivation, is in God essentially; therefore that which angers a good man, and ought so to do, displeases God, and consequently is against charity or the love of God. For it is but a vain dream to imagine, that because just men, such who are in the state of grace, and of the love of God, do commit smaller offences, therefore they are not against the love of God; for every degree of cold does abate something of the heat in any hot body; but yet because it cannot destroy it all, cold and heat may be consistent in the same subject; but no man can therefore say they are not contraries, and would not destroy each other if they were not hindered by something else; and so would the smallest offences also destroy the life of grace, if they were not destroyed themselves. But of this afterward. For the present, let it be considered,

how it can possibly consist with our love to God, with that duty that commands us to love him with all our heart, with all our strength, with all our might, and with all our soul; how (I say) it can be consistent with a love so extended, so intended, to entertain any thing that he hates so essentially. To these particulars I add this one consideration; that since there is in the world a fierce opinion, that some sins are so slight and little, that they do not destroy our relation to God, and cannot break the sacred tie of friendship, he who upon the inference and presumption of that opinion shall choose to commit such small sins, which he thinks to be the all that is permitted him, is not excused by that supposition; for if it be said, that he is therefore supposed to love God, because he only does those little sins which he thinks are not against the love of God, and if he did not think so, he would not do them; this excuses him not, but aggravates the sin, for it is turning the grace of God into wantonness. For since that such little things are the easier pardoned, is wholly owing to God's grace and his singular goodness, he that abuses this goodness to licentiousness, makes his sin to abound, because God's grace abounds; because God is good, he takes leave to do evil, that is, to be most contrary to God. For it is certain that every man in this case hath affections for sin as formerly; indeed he entertains it not in the ruder instances, because he dares not, but he does all that he dares do; for when he is taught that some certain sins are not damnable, there he will not abstain: which is a demonstration, that though he does something for fear, yet he does nothing for love.

26. IV. From this it follows, that every sin, though in the smallest instance, is a turning from God and a conversion to the creature. Suidas defines ἁμαρτίαν 'sin' to be τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀποτυχίαν,—'a declension from good;' and ἁμαρτάνειν is τοῦ σκόπου ἀποτυγχάνειν, that is, ἄσκοπα τοξεύειν,—'to shoot besides the mark,' to conduct our actions by an indirect line to a wrong object, from God to the creature. 'Peccare est tanquam lineas transilire;' so Cicero:[h] 'a sinner goes out of those limits' and marks which are appointed him by God. Than this, no greater evil can be spoken of any thing; and of this, all sin partakes more or less. Some few sins are direct aversions from God; so atheism, blasphemy, apostasy,

[h] Parad. iii. 1. 3. Wetzel.

resolution never to repent, and some few more: but many other very great sins are turnings from God, not directly, but by interpretation. He that commits fornication, may yet, by a direct act of understanding and a full consent, believe God to be the chiefest good: and some very vicious persons have given their lives for a good cause, and to preserve their innocence in some great instance, where the scene of their proper and natural temptation does not lie. Some others there are who, out of a sincere but an abused conscience, persecute a good cause; these men are zealous for God, and yet fight against him; but because these are real enemies, and but supposed friends, therefore, by interpretation, and in effect, they turn from God and turn to the creature. 'Delictum quasi derelictum,' said St. Austin;[1] because in every sin God is forsaken. "They have left me, the living fountain, and digged to themselves cisterns that hold no water:" so God complains by the prophet. He that prefers pleasure or profit before his duty, rejects God, but loves money, and pays his devotion to interest, or ease, or sensuality. And just so does the smallest sin. For since every action hath something propounded to it as its last end, it is certain he that sins does not do it for God, or in order to him. He that tells a lie to promote religion, or to save the life of a man, or to convert his soul, does not tell that lie for God, but tells the lie to make way for something else which is in order to God; he breaks his legs, that he may the better walk in the path of the Divine commandments. A sin cannot be for God, or in order to him, no, not so much as habitually. For whatsoever can never be referred to God actually, cannot at any time be referred habitually. Since, therefore, the smallest sins cannot be for God, that which is not with him, is against him; if it be no way for God, it is either directly or by interpretation for pleasure or ease, or profit or pride, for something that is against him.

27. And it is not to be neglected, that the smaller the sin is, the less it is excusable if it be done when it is observed. For if it be small, is it not the sooner obeyed, and the more reasonably exacted, and the more bountifully repaid, when heaven is given as the price of so small a service? He that pursues his crime for a mighty purchase, to get a kingdom,

[1] Lib. iii. Quæst. in Lev. c. 20.

or a vast estate, or an exquisite beauty, or something that is bigger than the ordinary virtues of easy and common men, hath something, not to warrant and legitimate, but to extenuate the offence by greatening the temptation. But to lose the friendship of God for a nutshell, to save sixpence, to lose heaven with peevishness, to despise the Divine laws for a nonsense insignificant vapour, and a testy pride,—hath no excuse; but it loads the sinner with the disreputation of a mighty folly. What excuse can be made for him that will not so much as hold his peace to please God? What can he do less for him? How should it be expected he should mortify his lusts, deny his ambition, part with his goods, lose an eye, cut off a hand, give his life for God, when he will not for God lose the no pleasure of talking vainly, and proudly, and ridiculously? If he will not chastise his wanton thoughts to please God, how shall he throw out his whole body of lust? If he will not resist the trifling temptations of a drinking friend to preserve his temperance, how shall he choose to be banished or murdered by the rage of a drunken prince, rather than keep the circle in their giddy and vertiginous method? The less the instance be, the direct aversation from God is also most commonly the less; but in many cases the aversation is by interpretation greater, more unreasonable, and therefore less excusable; as when the small instance is chosen by a perfect and distinct act of election; as it is in those who out of fear of hell quit the acting of their clamorous sins, and yet keep the affections to them, and consequently entertain them in thoughts and little reflections, in remembrances and fantastic images.

28. V. But if we reduce this question a little nearer to practice, and clothe it with circumstances, we shall find this account to be sadder than is usually supposed. But before I instance in the particulars, I shall premise this distinction of venial sins, which is necessary not only for the conducting of this question, but our consciences also in this whole article. The Roman schools say, that sins are venial, either by the imperfection of the agent, as when a thing is done ignorantly, or by surprise, or inadvertency: or, 2. A sin is venial by the smallness of the matter; as if a man steals a farthing, or eats a little too greedily at his meal, or lies in bed half an hour longer than would become him: or, 3. A sin (say they)

is venial in its whole kind, that is, such which God cannot, by the nature of the thing, punish with the highest punishment; such as are idle words and the like. Now first, I suppose that the two latter will be found to be both one: for either God hath not forbidden idleness or falseness, or he hath made no restraint at all upon words, but left us at liberty to talk as we please; for if he hath in this case made a law, then idle words either cannot pretend to an excuse, or it must be for the smallness of the matter; or else it must fall in with the first, and be excused, because they cannot always be attended to.

29. Now, concerning the first sort of venial sins, it is not a kind of sins, but a manner of making all sins venial, that is, apt for pardon: for by the imperfection of the agent or the act, all great sins in their matter, may become little in their malice and guilt. Now these are those which divines call sins of infirmity; and of them I shall give an account in a distinct chapter, under that title.

30. Concerning the second, *i. e.* sins venial for the smallness of the matter; I know none such. For if the matter be a particular that God hath expressly commanded or forbidden respectively, it is not little, but all one to him as that which we call the greatest. But if the particular be wholly relating to our neighbour, the smallness of the matter does not absolutely make the sin venial: for amongst us nothing is absolutely great, or absolutely little, but in comparison with something else; and if a vile person had robbed the poor woman that offered two mites to the treasury of the temple, he had undone her; a farthing there was all her substance: so that the smallness of the matter is not directly an excuse. If a man had robbed a rich man of a farthing, he had not indeed done him so great a mischief: but how if the rich man was not willing to part with his farthing, but would be angry at the injury, is it not a sin, because the theft was small? No man questions but it is. It follows, therefore, that the smallness of the matter cannot make a sin venial, but where there is a leave expressly given, or justly presumed: and if it be so in a great matter, it is as little a sin as if the matter were small, that is, none at all.

31. But now concerning the third, which the Roman schools dream of, sins venial in their own nature, and in

their whole kind; that is it which I have been disputing against all this while, and shall now further conclude against by arguments more practical and moral. For if we consider what are those particulars which these men call venial sins, in their whole kind and nature, we shall find that Christ and they give measures differing from each other. The catalogues of them I will take from the fathers, not that they ever thought these things to be in their nature venial (for they that think so of them are strangers to their writings: and to this purpose Bellarmine hath not brought one testimony pertinent and home to the question): but because they reckon such catalogues of venial sins, which demonstrate that they do mean sins made venial by accident, by men's infirmity, by God's grace, by pardon, by repentance, and not such which are so in their own nature. But the thing itself will be its own proof.

32. St. Austin[k] reckons, "vanas cachinnationes; in escis aviditatem, et immoderatiorem appetitum; in vendendis et emendis rebus; caritatis et vilitatis vota perversa; usum matrimonii ad libidinem; judicia apud infideles agitare; dicere fratri 'fatue:'—vain laughter; greediness in meat; an immoderate or ungoverned appetite; perverse desires of dearness and cheapness in buying and selling commodities; the use of marriage to lustfulness and inordination; to go to law before the unbelievers; to call our brother 'fool.'" St. Jerome[l] reckons, "jestings, anger, and injurious words." Cæsarius Arelatensis,[m] the bishop, reckons, "excess in eating and drinking; idle words; importune silence; to exasperate an importunate beggar; to omit the fasts of the Church; sleepiness or immoderate sleeping; the use of a wife to lustfulness; to omit the visitation of the sick and of prisoners; and to neglect to reconcile them that are at variance; too much severity or harshness to our family, or too great indulgence; flattery; talkings in the church; poor men to eat too much when they are brought rarely to a good table; forswearings (unwary perjury); slander or reproaches; rash judgment; hatred; sudden anger; envy; evil concupiscence; filthy thoughts; the lust of the eyes, the voluptuousness of the ears, or the itch of hearing; the speaking filthy words:" and

[k] Lib. l. homil. hom. 50. 7. serm. 244. de Temp. Enchir. c. 78.
[l] Dial. ii. adv. Pelag. [m] Homil. viii. et xiii.

indeed he reckons almost all the common sins of mankind. St. Bernard[n] reckons, "stultiloquium; vaniloquium; otiosè dicta, facta, cogitata;—talking vainly; talking like a fool; idle or vain thoughts, words, and deeds." These are the usual catalogues, and if any be reckoned, they must be these; for many times some of these are least consented to, most involuntary, most ready, less avoidable, of the lightest effect, of an eternal return, incurable in the whole, and therefore plead the most probably, and are the soonest likely to prevail for pardon: but yet they cannot pretend to need no pardon, or to fear no damnation. For our blessed Saviour says it of him that "speaks an angry word, that he shall be guilty of hell-fire." Now since we find such as these reckoned in the catalogue of venial sins; and St. Austin in particular calls that venial to which our blessed Saviour threatened hell-fire; it is certain he must not mean that it is, in its own nature, venial, but damnable as any other: but it is venial, that is, prepared for pardon upon other contingencies and causes, of which I shall afterward give account. In the meantime, I consider,

33. VI. When God appointed in the law expiatory sacrifices for sins, although there was enough to signify that there is difference in the degrees of sin, yet because they were 'eodem sanguine eluenda,' and, 'without shedding of blood there was no remission;' they were reckoned in the same accounts of death and the Divine anger. And it is manifest that by the severities and curse of the law no sin could escape. "For cursed is he that continues not in every thing written in the law, to do them." The law was a covenant of works and exact measures. There were no venial sins by virtue of that covenant; for there was no remission: and without the death of Christ we could not be eased of this state of danger. Since, therefore, that any sin is venial or pardonable, is only owing to the grace of God, to the death of Christ; and this death pardons all upon the condition of faith and repentance, and pardons none without it: it follows, that though sins differ in degree, yet they differ not in their natural and essential order to death. The man that commits any sin, dies if he repents not; and he that does repent timely

[n] De Præcept. et Dispens. c. xiv.

and effectually, dies for none. "The wages of sin is death;" of sin indefinitely, and therefore of all sin, and all death: for there is no more distinction of sin than death: only when death is threatened indefinitely, that death is to be understood which is properly and specifically threatened in that covenant where the death is named; as death temporal in the Law, death eternal under the Gospel.

34. And thus it appears in a very material instance relating to this question: for when our blessed Saviour had threatened the degrees of anger, he did it by apportioning several pains hereafter of one sort, to the several degrees of the same sin here, which he expresses by the several inflictions passed upon criminals by the houses of judgment among the Jews. Now it is observable, that 'to the least' of these sins Christ[o] assigns a punishment just proportionable to that, which the gloss of the Pharisees and the law itself did to them that committed murder, which was capital; "He shall be guilty of judgment;" so we read it, ἔνοχος τῇ κρίσει not κρίσεως: so it is in the Greek: he shall be guilty in the κρίσις, that is, 'in the court of judgment,' the assembly of the twenty-three elders; and there his punishment was death, but the gentlest manner of it, the decapitation or smiting him through with the sword; and therefore the least punishment hereafter answering to death here, can mean no less than death hereafter.[p] And so also was the second; ἔνοχος τῷ συνεδρίῳ, he that calls 'Raca,' shall be guilty,—that is, shall be used as one that stands guilty in the sanhedrim, or council,—meaning, that he is to die too, but with a severer execution, by stoning to death: this was the greatest punishment by the houses of judgment; for crucifixion was the Roman manner. These two already signify hell in a less degree, but as certainly and evidently as the third. For though we read hell-fire, in the third sentence only, yet γεέννα no otherwise signifies hell, than the other two by analogy and proportionable representment. The cause of the mistake is this: when Christ was pleased to add yet a further degree of punishment in hell to a further degree of anger and reproach, the Jews having no greater than that of

[o] Matt. v. 22.

[p] Ita interpretantur hunc locum Barradius, Maldonatus, et Estius ad hunc locum: et apud vetustiores eadem sententia prævaluit. Hæc enim erat mens Strabi Fuldensis qui glossam ordinariam compilavit, et Hugonis Cardinalis.

stoning by the judgment of the sanhedrim, or council, he would borrow his expression from that which they and their fathers too well understood, a barbarous custom of the Phœnicians of burning children alive in the valley of Hinnom,[1] which, in succession of time, the Hellenists call γεέννα, not much unlike the Hebrew word: and because by our blessed Lord it was used to signify or represent the greatest pains of hell that were spoken of in that gradation, the Christians took the word and made it to be its appellative, and to signify the state or place of the damned: just as גן עדן 'the garden of Eden' is called 'Paradise.' But it was no more intended this should signify hell, than that any of the other two should. The word itself never did so before; but that and the other two were taken as being the most fearful things amongst them here, to represent the degrees of the most intolerable state hereafter: just as damnation is called death, the second death; that because we fear the first as the worst of present evils, we may be affrighted with the apprehensions of the latter. From this authority it follows; that as in the law no sins were venial, but by repentance and sacrifice; so neither in the Gospel are they: not in their own nature, not by the more holy covenant of the Gospel, but by repentance and mortification. For the Gospel hath with greater severity laid restraint upon these minutes and little particles of action and passion: and, therefore, if in the law every transgression was exacted, we cannot reasonably think that the least parts of duty, which the Gospel superadded with a new and severer caution, as great and greater than that by which the law exacted the greatest commandments, can be broken with indemnity, or without the highest danger. The law exacted all its smallest minutes; and, therefore, so does the Gospel, as being a covenant of greater holiness. But as in the law for the smaller transgressions there was an assignment of expiatory rites; so is there, in the Gospel, of a ready repentance, and a prepared mercy.

37. VII. Lastly: those things which men in health are bound to avoid, those sins for which Christ did shed his most precious blood, those sins for which a dying man is bound to ask pardon, though he hopes not, or desires not to escape temporal death, certain it is, that those sins are in their

[1] גי הנם

nature, and in the economy or dispensation of the Divine threatenings, damnable. For what can the dying man fear but death eternal? And if he be bound to repent and ask pardon even for the smallest sins which he can remember, in order to what pardon can that repentance be, but of the eternal pain, to which every sin by its own demerit naturally descends? If he must repent and ask pardon when he hopes not or desires not the temporal, it is certain he must repent, only that he may obtain the eternal. And they that will think otherwise, will also find themselves deceived in this. For if the damned souls in hell are punished for all their sins, then the unpardoned venial sins are there also smarted for. But so it is, and so we are taught in the doctrine of our great Master. 'If we agree not while we are in the way, we shall be cast into the eternal prison, and shall not depart thence till we have paid the uttermost farthing.' That is, ever for our smallest sins, if they be unremitted, men shall pay in hell their horrible symbol of damnation. And this is confessed on all hands :[r] that they who fall into hell, pay their sorrows there even for all. But it is pretended, that this is only by accident,[s] not by the first intention of the Divine justice; because it happens that they are subjected in such persons, who for other sins (not for these) go to hell, Well! yet let it be considered, whether or no do not the smallest unremitted sins increase the torments of hell in their proportion? If they do not, then they are not at all punished in hell; for if without them the perishing soul is equally punished, then for them there is no punishment at all. But if they do increase the pains, as it is certain they do, then to them properly, and for their own malignity and demerit, a portion of eternal pains is assigned. Now if God punishes them in hell, then they deserved hell; if they be damnable in their event, then they were so in their merit; for God never punishes any sin more than it deserves, though he often does less. But to say, that this is by accident, that is, for their conjunction with mortal sins, is confuted infinitely, because God punishes them with degrees of evil proper to them, and for their own demerit. Their is no other accident by which these come to be smarted for in hell, but because

[r] Aquinas, 1, 2. quæst. 87. art. 5.
[s] Bellar. de Amiss. Gra. lib. i. c. 14. sect. Ex. ad.

they were not repented of; for by that accident they become mortal; as by the contrary accident, to wit, if the sinner repents worthily, not only the smallest, but the greatest also, become venial: the impenitent pays for all; all together. But if the man be a worthy penitent, if he continues and abides in God's love, he will find a mercy according to his circumstances, by the measures of God's graciousness, and his own repentance; so that by accident they may be pardoned; but if that accident does not happen, if the man be not penitent, the sins shall be punished directly, and for their own natural demerit. The sum is this:

If a man repents truly of the greater sins, he also repents of the smallest; for it cannot be a true repentance which refuses to repent of any; so that if it happens, that for the smallest he do smart in hell, it is because he did not repent truly of any, greatest, nor smallest. But if it happens, that the man did not commit any of the greater sins, and yet did indulge to himself a license to do the smallest,—even, for those which he calls the smallest, he may perish; and what he is pleased to call little, God may call great. "Cum his peccatis neminem salvandum," said St. Bernard:[t] "with these," (even the smallest sins) actually remaining upon him unrepented of in general or particular, "no man can be saved."

SECTION IV.

The former Doctrine reduced to Practice.

36. I HAVE been the more earnest in this article, not only because the doctrine which I have all this while opposed, makes all the whole doctrine of moral theology to be inartificial, and in many degrees useless, false, and imprudent; but because of the immediate influence it hath to encourage evil lives of men. For,

37. I. To distinguish a whole kind of sins, is a certain way to make repentance and amendment of life imperfect and false. For when men by fears and terrible considerations are scared from their sins, as most repentances begin with fear, they still retain some portions of affection to their

[t] Serm. i. de Cœnâ Dom. et Serm. i. de Convers. Pauli.

sin, some lookings back and fantastic entertainments, which if they be not pared off by repentance, we love not God with all our hearts; and yet by this doctrine of distinguishing sins into mortal and venial in their whole kind and nature, men are taught to arrest their repentances, and have leave not to proceed further; for they who say sins are venial in their own nature, if they understand the consequences of their own doctrine, do not require repentance to make them so, or to obtain a pardon which they need not.

38. II. As by this means our repentances are made imperfect, so is a relapse extremely ready; for while such a leaven is left, it is ten to one but it may sour the whole mass. St. Gregory said well,[u] "Si curare parva negligimus, insensibiliter seducti audenter etiam majora perpetramus:" we are too apt to return to our old crimes, whose relics we are permitted to keep and kiss.

39. III. But it is worse yet. For the distinction of sins mortal and venial in their nature is such a separation of sin from sin, as is rather a dispensation or leave to commit one sort of them; the expiation of which is so easy, the pardon so certain, the remedy so ready, the observation and exaction of them so inconsiderable. For there being so many ways of making great sins little, and little sins none at all, found out by the folly of men and the craft of the devil,—a great portion of God's right, and the duty we owe to him, are by way of compromise and agreement, left as a portion to carelessness and folly: and why may not a man rejoice in those trifling sins, for which he hath security he shall never be damned? As for the device of purgatory, indeed, if there were any such thing, it were enough to scare any one from committing any sins, much more little ones. But I have conversed with many of that persuasion, and yet never observed any to whom it was a terror to speak of purgatory, but would talk of it as an antidote or security against hell, but not as a formidable story to affright them from their sins, but to warrant their venial sins, and their imperfect repentance for their mortal sins. And, indeed, let it be considered, if venial sins be such as the Roman doctors describe them, that 'they neither destroy nor lessen charity,' or the grace of God, that 'they only hinder the fervency of an act,' which sleep or business,

[u] Lib. Moral. c. 14.

or any thing that is most innocent, may do; that they are not against the law, but besides it, as walking and riding, standing and sitting, are; that they are not properly sins; that 'all the venial sins in the world cannot amount to one mortal sin,' but as time differs from eternity, finite from infinite, so do all the venial sins in the world put together, from one mortal act; that for all them a man is nevertheless beloved, and loves God nothing the less;—I say, if venial sins be such (as the Roman writers affirm they are), how can it be imagined to be agreeable to God's goodness to inflict upon such sinners, who only have venial sins unsatisfied for, such horrible pains (which they dream of in purgatory) as are, during their abode, equal to the intolerable pains of hell, for that which breaks none of his laws, which angers him not, which is not against him or his love, which is incident to his dearest servants? 'Pro peccato magno paulum supplicii satis est patri;' but if fathers take such severe amends of their children for that which is not properly sin, there is nothing left by which we can boast of a father's kindness. In this case, there is no remission; for if it be not just in God to punish such sins in hell, because they are consistent with the state of the love of God, and yet they are punished in purgatory, that is, as much as they can be punished; then God does remit to his children nothing for their love's sake, but deals with them as severely as for his justice he can, in the matter of venial sins; indeed, if he uses mercy to them at all, it is in remitting their mortal sins; but in their venial sins, he uses none at all. Now if things were thus on both sides, it is strange, men are not more afraid of their venial sins, and that they are not more terrible in their description, which are so sad in their event; and that their punishment should be so great, when their malice is so none at all; and it is strangest of all, that if men did believe such horrible effects to be consequent of venial sins, they should esteem them little and inconsiderable, and warn men of them with so little caution. But to take this wonder off, though they affright men with purgatory at the end, yet they make the bugbear nothing by their easy remedies and preventions in the way. Venial sins may be taken off, according to their doctrine, at as cheap a rate as they may be committed; but of this I shall give a fuller account in the sixth section of this

chapter. In the meantime, to believe purgatory, serves the ends of the Roman clergy; and to have so much easiness and leave in venial sins, serves the ends of their laity; but as truth is disserved in the former, so are piety and the severities of a holy life very much slackened by the latter.

40. But as care is taken that their doctrine do not destroy charity or good life by looseness and indulgence, so care must be taken that ours do not destroy hope, and discountenance the endeavours of pious people; for if the smallest sins be so highly punishable, who can hope ever to escape the intolerable state of damnation? And if God can be eternally angry for those things which we account small sins, then no man is a servant or a friend of God; no man is in the state of the Divine favour: for no man is without these sins; for they are such,

Quæ non possit homo quisquam evitare cavendo,

'a man, by all his industry, cannot wholly avoid.' Now because the Scripture pronounces some persons 'just,' and 'righteous,' as David and Josiah, Zachary and Elizabeth, who yet could not be innocent and pure from small offences: either these little things are in their own nature venial, or the godly have leave to do that which is punished in the ungodly; or some other way must be found out, how that which is in its own nature damnable, can stand with the state of grace; and upon what causes, sins which of themselves are not so, may come to be venial, that is, more apt and ready to be pardoned, and in the next dispositions to receive a mercy.

SECTION V.

41. I. No just person does or can indulge to himself the keeping of any sin whatsoever; for all sins are accounted of by God according to our affections, and if a man loves any, it becomes his poison. Every sin is damnable when it is chosen deliberately, either by express act or by interpretation; that is, when it is chosen regularly or frequently. He that loves to cast over in his mind the pleasures of his past sin, he that entertains all those instances of sin, which he

thinks not to be damnable, this man hath given himself up to be a servant to a trifle, a lover of little and fantastic pleasures. Nothing of this can stand with the state of grace. No man can love sin and love God at the same time; and to think it to be an excuse to say the sin is little, is as if an adulteress should hope for pardon of her offended lord, because the man whom she dotes upon is an inconsiderable person.

42. II. In sins we must distinguish the formality from the material part. The formality of sin is disobedience to God, and turning from him to the creature by love and adhesion. The material part is the action itself. The first can never happen without our will; but the latter may by surprise, and indeliberation, and imperfection of condition. For in this life our understanding is weak, our attention trifling, our advertency interrupted, our diversions many, our divisions of spirit irresistible, our knowledge little, our dulness frequent, our mistakes many, our fears potent, and betrayers of our reason; and at any of these doors sin may enter, in its material part, while the will is inactive, or the understanding dull, or the affections busy, or the spirit otherwise employed, or the faculties wearied, or reason abused: therefore if you inquire for venial sins, they must be in this throng of imperfections, but they never go higher. Let no man therefore say, I have a desire to please myself in some little things; for if he desires it, he may not do it, that very desire makes that it cannot be venial, but as damnable as any, in its proportion.

43. III. If any man about to do an action of sin, inquires whether it be a venial sin or no,—to that man, at that time, that sin cannot be venial: for whatsoever a man considers, and acts, he also chooses and loves in some proportion, and therefore turns from God to the sin, and that is against the love of God, and in its degree destructive or diminutive of the state of grace. Besides this, such a person in this inquiry asks leave to sin against God, and gives a testimony that he would sin more if he durst. But in the same degree in which the choice is lessened, in the same degree the material part of the sin receives also diminution.

44. IV. It is remarkable, that amongst the ancients this distinction of sins into mortal and venial, or, to use their own words, 'graviora et leviora,' or 'peccata et crimina,' does

not mean a distinction of kind, but of degrees. They call them mortal sins, which shall never, or very hardly, be pardoned, not at all but upon very hard terms. So Pacianus;[x] "De modo criminum edisserens nequis existimet omnibus omnino peccatis summum discrimen impositum; seduloque requirens, quæ sint peccata, quæ crimina, nequis existimet propter innumera delicta, quorum fraudibus nullus immunis est, me omne hominum genus indiscretâ pœnitendi lege constringere." The highest danger is not in every sin; offences and crimes must be distinguished carefully: for the same severe impositions are not indifferently to be laid upon criminals and those whose guilt is in such instances from which no man is free. "Wherefore covetousness may be redeemed with liberality, slander with satisfaction, morosity with cheerfulness, sharpness with gentle usages, lightness with gravity, perverseness or peevishness with honesty and fair carriage. But what shall the despiser of God do? what shall the murderer do? what remedy shall the adulterer[y] have? 'Ista sunt capitalia, fratres, ista mortalia:—These are the deadly sins, these are capital crimes:'" meaning, that these were to be taken off by the severities of ecclesiastical or public repentance (of which I am afterward to give account), and would cost more to be cleansed. To a good man, and 'meliorum operum compensatione' (as Pacianus affirms),—'by the compensation of good work,' that is, of the actions of the contrary graces, they are venial, they are cured. For by venial they mean such which with less difficulty and hazard may be pardoned: such as was St. Paul's blasphemy and persecuting the Church; for that was venial, that is, apt for pardon, because he did it 'ignorantly in unbelief:' and such are those sins (saith Cæsarius) which are usual in the world, though of their own nature very horrible, as forswearing ourselves, slander, reproach, and the like; yet because they are extremely common, they are such, to which if a continual pardon were not offered, God's numbers would be infinitely lessened. In this sense every sin is venial, excepting the three capitals reckoned in Tertullian, 'idolatry, murder, and adultery;' every thing but the sin again the Holy Ghost, and its branches reckoned in Pacianus; every thing

[x] In Paræn.

[y] Fornicator. Promiscuè sæpius usurpantur fornicatio et adulterium.

but the seven deadly sins, in others. Now, according to the degree and malignity of the sin, or its abatement by any lessening circumstance or intervening considerations, so it puts on its degrees of veniality or being pardonable. Every sin hath some degree of being venial, till it arrives at the unpardonable state, and then none is. But every sin that hath many degrees of venial, hath also some degrees of damnable. So that to inquire what venial sins can stand with the state of grace, is to ask, how long a man may sin before he shall be damned; how long will God still forbear him; how long he will continue to give him leave to repent? For a sin is venial upon no other account but of repentance. If venial be taken for pardonable, it is true that many circumstances make it so, more or less; that is, whatever makes the sin greater or less, makes it more or less venial: and of these I shall give account in the chapter of sins of infirmity. But if by venial, we mean actually pardoned, or not exacted: nothing makes a sin venial, but repentance; and that makes every sin to be so. Therefore,

45. V. Some sins are admitted by holy persons, and yet they still continue; not that any of these sins is permitted to them; nor that God cannot as justly exact them of his servants as of his enemies; nor that in the covenant of the Gospel they are not imputable; nor that their being in God's favour hides them, for God is most impatient of any remaining evil in his children: but the only reasonable account of it is, because the state of grace is a state of repentance; these sins are those, which, as Pacianus expresses it, 'contrariis emendata proficiunt,—they can be helped by contrary actions:' and the good man does perpetually watch against them, he opposes a good against every evil; that is, in effect he uses them just as he uses the greatest that ever he committed. Thus the good man when he reproves a sinning person, overacts his anger, and is transported to indecency, though it be for God: some are over-zealous, some are fantastic and too apt to opinion, which in little degrees of inordination are not so soon discernible. A good man may be overjoyed, or too much pleased with his recreation, or be too passionate at the death of a child, or in a sudden anger go beyond the evenness of a wise Christian, and yet be a good man still, and a friend of God, his son and his servant: but

then these things happen in despite of all his care and observation; and when he does espy any of these obliquities, he is troubled at it, and seeks to amend it: and therefore, these things are venial, that is, pitied and excused, because they are unavoidable, but avoided as much as they well can (all things considered), and God does not exact them of him, because the good man exacts them of himself. These being the rules of doctrine, we are to practise accordingly.

To which add the following measures.

46. VI. This difference in sins, of mortal and venial, that is, greater and less, is not to be considered by us, but by God alone, and cannot have influence upon us to any good purposes. For, 1. We do not always know by what particular measures they are lessened: in general we know some proportions of them, but when we come to particulars, we may easily be deceived, but can very hardly be exact. St. Austin[z] said the same thing; "Quæ sint levia, et quæ gravia peccata, non humano sed Divino sunt pensanda judicio;—God only, not man, can tell which sins are great, and which little." For since we see them equally forbidden, we must with equal care avoid them all. Indeed, if the case should be so put, that we must either commit sacrilege, or tell a spiteful lie, kill a man, or speak unclean words, then it might be of use to us, to consider which is the greater, which is less, that, of evils we might choose the less; but this case can never be, for no man is ever brought to that necessity, that he must choose one sin; for he can choose to die before he shall do either, and that is the worst that he can be put to. And therefore, though right reason and experience, and some general lines of religion, mark out some actions as criminal, and leave others under a general and indefinite condemnation, yet it is in order to repentance and amends when such things are done, not to greater caution directly of avoiding them in the days of temptation; for of two infinites in the same kind, one cannot be bigger than the other. We are tied with the biggest care to avoid every sin, and bigger than the biggest we find not. This only: for the avoiding of the greatest sins, there are more arguments from without, and sometimes more instruments and ministries of caution and

[z] Enchirid. c. lxxviii.

prevention are to be used, than in lesser sins; but it is because fewer will serve in one than in another; but all that is needful must be used in all: but there is no difference in our choice that can be considerable, for we must never choose either; and therefore beforehand to compare them together, whereof neither is to be preferred before the other, is to lay a snare for ourselves, and make us apt to one by undervaluing it, and calling it less than others, that affright us more. Indeed, when the sin is done, to measure it may be of use (as I shall shew), but to do it beforehand hath danger in it of being tempted, and more than a danger of being deceived: for our hearts deceive us, our purposes are complicated, and we know not which end is principally intended, nor by what argument, amongst many, we were finally determined, or which is the prevailing ingredient; nor are we competent judges of our own strengths, and we can do more than we think we can; and we remember not, that the temptation which prevails, was sought for by ourselves: nor can we separate necessity from choice, our consent from our being betrayed; nor tell whether our fort is given up, because we would do so, or because we could not help it. Who can tell whether he could not stand one assault more,—and if he had, whether or no the temptation would not have left him? The ways of consent are not always direct, and if they be crooked, we see them not. And, after all this, if we were able, yet we are not willing, to judge right, with truth, and with severity; something for ourselves, something for excuse, something for pride; a little for vanity and a little in hypocrisy, but a great deal for peace and quiet, that the rest of the mind may not be disturbed, that we may live and die in peace, and in a good opinion of ourselves. These indeed are evil measures, but such by which we usually make judgment of our actions, and are therefore likely to call great sins little, and little sins none at all.

47. II. That any sins are venial being only because of the state of grace and repentance, under which they are admitted; what condition a man is in, even for the smallest sins, he can no more know than he can tell that all his other sins are pardoned, that his repentance is accepted, that nothing of God's anger is reserved, that he is pleased for all, that there is no judgment behind hanging over his head, to

strike him for that wherein he was most negligent. Now although some men have great and just confidences that they are actually in God's favour, yet all good men have not so. For there are coverings sometimes put over the spirits of the best men; and there are intermedial and doubtful states of men (as I shall represent in the chapter of actual sins), there are also ebbings and flowings of sin and pardon: and therefore, none but God only knows how long this state of veniality and pardon will last; and therefore, as no man can pronounce concerning any kind of sins, that they are in themselves venial, so neither can he know concerning his own, or any man's particular state, that any such sins are pardoned, or venial to him. He that lives a good life, will find it so in its own case, and in the event of things; and that is all which can be said as to this particular; and it is well it is so, "ne studium proficiendi ad omnia peccata cavenda pigrescat," as St. Austin well observed. If it were otherwise, and that sins in their own nature by venial and not venial are distinguished and separate in their natures from each other, and that some of them are of so easy remedy, and inconsiderable a guilt, they would never become earnest to avoid all.

48. III. There are some sins which indeed seem venial, and were they not sentenced in Scripture with severe words, would pass for trifles; but "in Scripturis demonstrantur opinione graviora," as St. Austin notes;[a] "they are by the word of God declared to be greater than they are thought to be;" and we have reason to judge so, concerning many instances, in which men are too easy and cruelly kind unto themselves. St. Paul said, "I had not known concupiscence to be a sin, if the law had not said, Thou shalt not lust:" and we use to call them scrupulous and fantastic persons who make much ado about a careless word, and call themselves to severe account for every thought, and are troubled for every morsel they eat, when it can be disputed whether it might not better have been spared. Who could have guessed that calling my enemy 'fool' should be so great a matter; but because we are told that it is so, told by Him that shall be our judge, who shall call us to account for every idle word? We may well think that the measures which men usually make by their customs and false principles, and their own necessities, lest

[a] Enchirid. c. lxxix.

they by themselves should be condemned, are weak and fallacious: and therefore, whatsoever can be of truth in the difference of sins, may become a danger to them who desire to distinguish them, but can bring no advantages to the interests of piety and a holy life.

49. IV. We only account those sins great which are unusual, which rush violently against the conscience, because men have not been acquainted with them: "Peccata sola inusitata exhorrescimus, usitata verò diligimus."[b] But those which they act every day, they suppose them to be small, 'quotidianæ incursiones,' the unavoidable acts of every day, and by degrees our spirit is reconciled to them, conversing with them as with a tame wolf, who by custom hath forgotten the circumstances of his barbarous nature, but is a wolf still. Τὰ μικρὰ καὶ συνήθη τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, as Synesius calls them: 'the little customs of sinning,' men think, ought to be dissembled. This was so of old; Cæsarius, bishop of Arles, complained of it in his time. "Vere dico, fratres,"[c] &c.—"I say truly to you, brethren, this thing, according to the law and commandment of our Lord, never was lawful, neither is it, nor shall it ever be; but as if it were worse, 'ita peccata ista in consuetudinem missa sunt, et tanti sunt qui illa faciunt, ut jam quasi ex licito fieri credantur,'—these sins are so usual and common, that men now begin to think them lawful.'" And, indeed, who can do a sin every day, and think it great and highly damnable? If he think so, it will be very uneasy for him to keep it: but, if he will keep it, he will also endeavour to get some protection or excuse for it; something to warrant, or something to undervalue it; and at last it shall be accounted venial, and by some means or other reconcilable with the hopes of heaven. He that is used to oppress the poor every day, thinks he is a charitable man, if he lets them go away with any thing he could have taken from them: but he is not troubled in conscience for detaining the wages of the hireling, with deferring to do justice, with little arts of exaction and lessening their provisions. For since nothing is great or little but in comparison with something else, he accounts his sin small, because he commits greater; and he that can suffer the greatest burden, shrinks not under a

[b] August. ubi suprà. [c] Hom. xvi.

lighter weight; and upon this account it is impossible but such men must be deceived and die.

50. V. Let no man think that his venial or smaller sins shall be pardoned for the smallness of their matter, and in a distinct account; for a man is not quit of the smallest but by being also quit of the greatest: for God does not pardon any sin to him that remains his enemy; and therefore, unless the man be a good man, and in the state of grace, he cannot hope that his venial sins can be in any sense indulged; they increase the burden of the other, and are like little stones laid upon a shoulder already crushed with an unequal load. Either God pardons the greatest, or the least stand uncancelled.

51. VI. Although God never pardons the smallest without the greatest, yet he sometimes retains the smallest of them, whose greatest he hath pardoned. The reason is, because, although a man be in the state of grace and of the Divine favour, and God will not destroy his servants for every calamity of theirs, yet he will not suffer any thing that is amiss in them. A father never pardons the small offences of his son who is in rebellion against him; those little offences cannot pretend to pardon till he be reconciled to his father; but, if he be, yet his father may chastise his little misdemeanours, or reserve some of his displeasure so far as may minister to discipline, not to destruction: and therefore, if a son have escaped his father's anger and final displeasure, let him remember, that though his father is not willing to disinherit him, yet he will be ready to chastise him. And we see it by the whole dispensation of God, that 'the righteous are punished,' and afflictions 'begin at the house of God;' and God is so impatient even of little evils in them, that to make them pure he will draw them through the fire; and there are some who are 'saved, yet so as by fire.' And certainly, those sins ought not to be neglected, or esteemed little, which provoke God to anger even against his servants. We find this instanced in the case of the Corinthians, who used indecent circumstances and unhandsome usages of the blessed sacrament; even for this, God severely reproved them; "for this cause many are weak, and sick, and some are fallen asleep,"[d]

[d] 1 Cor. xi. 30.

which is an expression used in Scripture to signify them that die in the Lord, and is not used to signify the death of them that perish from the presence of the Lord. These persons died in the state of grace and repentance, but yet died in their sin; chastised for their lesser sins, but so that their souls were saved. This is that which Clemens Alexandrinus[e] affirms of sins committed after our illumination, τὰ δὲ ἐπιγινόμενα ἐκκαθαίρεται,—'These sins must be purged' with a παίδευσις, 'with the chastisements of sons.' The result of this consideration is that which St. Peter advises, "that we pass the time of our sojourning here in fear:" for no man ought to walk confidently, who knows that even the most laudable life hath in it evil enough to be smarted for with a severe calamity.

52. VII. The most trifling actions, the daily incursions of sins, though of the least malignity, yet if they be neglected, combine and knit together, till by their multitude they grow insupportable; this caution I learn from Cæsarius Arelatensis.[f] "Et hoc considerate, fratres, quia etiamsi capitalia crimina not subreperent, ipsa minuta peccata quæ (quod pejus est) aut non attendimus, aut certè pro nihilo computamus, si simul omnia congregentur, nescio quæ bonorum operum abundantia illis præponderare sufficiat;—Although capital sins invade you not, yet if your minutes, your small sins, which either we do not consider at all, or value not at all, be combined, or gathered into one heap, I know not what multitude of good works will suffice to weigh them down." For little sins are like the sand, and when they become a heap are heavy as lead; and "a leaking ship may as certainly perish with the little inlets of water as with a mighty wave;"[g] for of many drops a river is made; and therefore, "ipsa minuta vel levia non contemnantur. Illa enim quæ humanæ frigilitati quamvis parva tamen crebra subrepunt, quasi collecta contra nos fuerint, ita nos gravabunt sicut unum aliquod grande peccatum;[h]—Let no little sins be despised, for even those smallest things which creep upon us by our natural weakness, yet when they are gathered together against us, stand on a heap, and like an army

[e] Stromat. 4.
[f] Hom. iii.
[g] St. August. Epist. 108. ad Seleu. lib. l. hom. 42.
[h] Idem, tract. 1. in ep. Johan. Levia multa faciunt unum grande.

of flies can destroy us as well as any one deadly enemy. "Quæ quamvis singula non lethali vulnere ferire sentiantur, sicut homicidium, et adulterium, vel cætera hujusmodi, tamen omnia simul congregata velut scabies, quo plura sunt, necant, et nostrum decus ita exterminant, ut à filii sponsi, speciosi formâ præ filiis hominum, castissimis amplexibus separent, nisi medicamento quotidianæ pœnitentiæ dissecentur:—Indeed, we do not feel every one of them strike so home and deadly, as murder and adultery do; yet when they are united, they are like a scab, they kill with their multitude, and so destroy our internal beauty, that they separate us from the purest embraces of the Bridegroom, unless they be scattered with the medicine of a daily repentance."[1] For he that does these little sins often, and repents not of them, nor strives against them, either loves them directly or by interpretation.

53. VIII. Let no man, when he is tempted to a sin, go then to take measures of it; because it being his own case, he is an unequal and incompetent judge; his temptation is his prejudice and his bribe, and it is ten to one but he will suck in the poison, by his making himself believe that the potion is not deadly. Examine not the particular measures unless the sin be indeed by its disreputation great; then examine as much as you please, provided you go not about to lessen it. It is enough it is a sin, condemned by the laws of God, and that death and damnation are its wages.

54. IX. When the mischief is done, then you may, in the first days of your shame and sorrow for it, with more safety, take its measures. For immediately after acting, sin does to most men appear in all its ugliness and deformity: and if in the days of your temptation you did lessen the measure of your sin, yet in the days of your sorrow, do not shorten the measures of repentance. Every sin is deadly enough; and no repentance or godly sorrow can be too great for that which hath deserved the eternal wrath of God.

55. X. I end these advices with the meditation of St. Jerome. "Si ira et sermonis injuria, atque interdum jocus, judicio, conciliòque, atque Gehennæ ignibus delegatur, quid merebitur turpium rerum appetitio, et avaritia quæ est radix omnium malorum?—If anger, and injurious words, and

[1] Lib. 1. hom. 80. c. 8.

sometimes a foolish jest, are sentenced to capital and supreme punishments, what punishments shall the lustful and the covetous have?" And what will be the event of all our souls, who reckon those injurious or angry words of calling 'fool,' or 'sot' amongst the smallest, and those which are indeed less we do not observe at all? For who is there amongst us almost, who calls himself to an account for trifling words, loose laughter, the smallest beginnings of intemperance, careless spending too great portions of our time in trifling visits and courtships, balls, revellings, fantastic dressings, sleepiness, idleness, and useless conversation, neglecting our times of prayer frequently, or causelessly slighting religion and religious persons, siding with factions indifferently, forgetting our former obligations upon trifling regards, vain thoughts, wanderings, and weariness at our devotion, love of praise, laying little plots and snares to be commended; high opinion of ourselves, resolutions to excuse all, and never to confess an error; going to church for vain purposes, itching ears, love of flattery, and thousands more? The very kinds of them put together are a heap; and therefore, the so frequent and almost infinite repetition of the acts of all those are, as David's expression is, without hyperbole, 'more than the hairs upon our head;' they are like the number of the sands upon the sea-shore for multitude.

SECTION VI.

What Repentance is necessary for the smaller or more venial Sins.

56. I. Upon supposition of the premises; since these smaller sins are of the same nature, and the same guilt, and the same enmity against God, and consigned to the same evil portion that other sins are, they are to be washed off with the same repentance also as others. Christ's blood is the lavatory, and faith and repentance are the two hands that wash ourselves white from the greatest and the least stains: and since they are by the impenitent to be paid for in the same fearful prisons of darkness, by the same remedies and instruments the intolerable sentence can only be prevented.

The same ingredients, but a less quantity possibly may make the medicine. Cæsarius, bishop of Arles, who spake many excellent things in this article, says, that for these smaller sins a private repentance is proportionable:[k] "Si levia fortasse sunt delicta, v. g. si homo vel in sermone, vel in aliquâ reprehensibili voluntate; si in oculo peccavit, aut corde; verborum et cogitationum maculæ quotidianâ oratione curandæ, et privatâ compunctione terendæ sunt;—The sins of the eye, and the sins of the heart, and the offences of the tongue, are to be cured by secret contrition and compunction and a daily prayer." But St. Cyprian commends many whose conscience being of a tender complexion, they would even for the thoughts of their heart do public penance. His words are these;[l]—"multos timoratæ conscientiæ, quamvis nullo sacrificii aut libelli facinore constricti essent, quoniam tamen de hoc vel cogitaverunt, hoc ipsum apud sacerdotes Dei dolenter et simpliciter confitentes exomologesin conscientiæ fecisse, animi sui pondus exposuisse, salutarem medelam parvis licet et modicis vulneribus exquirentes;—Because they had but thought of complying with idolaters, they sadly and ingenuously came to the ministers of holy things, God's priests, confessing the secret turpitude of their conscience, laying aside the weight that pressed their spirit, and seeking remedy even for their smallest wounds." And, indeed, we find that among the ancients[m] there was no other difference in assignation of repentance to the several degrees of sin, but only by public and private; capital sins they would have submitted to public judgment; but the lesser evils to be mourned for in private: of this I shall give account in the chapter of ecclesiastical repentance. In the meantime their general rule was, that because the lesser sins came in by a daily incursion, therefore they were to be cut off by a daily repentance; which, because it was daily, could not be so intense and signally punitive as the sharper repentances for the seldom returning sins; yet as the sins were daily, but of less malice, so their repentance must be daily, but of less affliction. "Medicamento quotidianæ pœnitentiæ dissecentur;" that was St. Austin's rule.[n] Those evils that happen every day, must be cried out against every day.

[k] Hom. i. [l] De Lapsis.
[m] Vide St. Aug. lib. lxxxiii. q. 26; et Cæsar. Arelat. hom. i. [n] Lib. l. hom. 50. c. 8.

57. II. Every action of repentance, every good work done for the love of God, and in the state of grace, and designed, and particularly applied, to the intercession of the smallest unavoidable sins, is, through the efficacy of Christ's death, and in the virtue of repentance, operative towards the expiation or pardon of them. For a man cannot do all the particulars of repentance for every sin; but, out of the general hatred of sin, picks out some special instances, and apportions them to his special sins; as to acts of uncleanness he opposes acts of severity, to intemperance he opposes fasting. But then, as he rests not here, but goes on to the consummation of repentance in his whole life: so it must be in the more venial sins. A less instance of express anger is graciously accepted, if it be done in the state of grace, and in the virtue of repentance; but then the pardon is to be completed in the pursuance and integrity of that grace, in the sums total. For no man can say that so much sorrow, or such a degree of repentance, is enough to any sin he hath done: and yet a man cannot apportion to every sin large portions of special sorrow, it must therefore be done all his lifetime; and the little portions must be made up by the whole grace and state of repentance. One instance is enough particularly to express the anger, or to apply the grace of repentance to any single sin which is not among the capitals; but no one instance is enough to extinguish it. For sin is not pardoned in an instant (as I shall afterward discourse), neither is the remedy of a natural and a just proportion to the sin. Therefore, when many of the ancient doctors apply to venial sins special remedies, by way of expiation, or deprecation, such as are, "beating the breast, saying the Lord's prayer, alms, communicating, confessing,"[o] and some others; the doctrine of such remedies is not true, if it be understood that those particulars are just physically or meritoriously proportioned to the sin. No one of these alone is a cure or expiation of the past sin; but every one of these in the virtue of repentance is effective to its part of the work, that is, he that repents and forsakes them as he can, shall be accepted,

[o] Ecclesia Romana alia excogitavit facilè, quorum nonnulla declinant aperte nimis ad superstitionem:

Confiteor, tundo, conspergor, conteror, oro,
Signor, edo, dono, per hæc venialia pono.

though the expression of his repentance be applied to his fault but in one or more of these single instances; because all good works done in the faith of Christ, have an efficacy towards the extinction of those sins which cannot be avoided by any moral diligence; there is no other thing on our parts which can be done, and if that which is unavoidable, were also irremediable, our condition would be intolerable and desperate. To the sense of this advice we have the words of St. Gregory: "Si quis ergo peccata sua tecta esse desiderat, Deo ea per vocem confessionis ostendat," &c.—"If any man desires to have his sins covered, let him first open them to God in confession: but there are some sins, which, so long as we live in this world, can hardly, or indeed not at all be wholly avoided by perfect men. For holy men have something in this life, which they ought to cover; for it is altogether impossible that they should never sin in word or thought. Therefore, the men of God do study to cover the faults of their eyes or tongue with good deeds, they study to overpower the number of their idle words with the weight of good works. But how can it be that the faults of good men should be covered, when all things are naked to the eyes of God? but only because that which is covered is put under, something is brought over it: our sins are covered when we bring over them the cover of good works."—But Cæsarius, the bishop, is more punctual, and descends to particulars. For having given this general rule, "Illa parva vel quotidiana peccata bonis operibus redimere non desistant,—Let them not cease to redeem or expiate their daily and small faults with good works;" he adds, "But I desire more fully to insinuate to you, with what works small sins are taken off. So often as we visit the sick, go (in charity) to them that are in prison, reconcile variances, keep the fasts of the Church, wash the feet of strangers, repair to the vigils and watches of the Church, give alms to passing beggars, forgive our enemies when they ask pardon:" "istis enim operibus et his similibus minuta peccata quotidiè redimuntur;—with these and the like works the minute or smaller sins are daily redeemed or taken off."

58. III. There is in prayer a particular efficacy, and it is of proper use and application in the case of the more venial and unavoidable sins, rather this than any other alone,

especially being helped by charity, that is, alms and forgiveness. Because the greatest number of venial sins come in (as I shall[p] afterward demonstrate) upon the stock of ignorance, or, which is all one, imperfect notices and acts of understanding; and therefore, have not any thing in the natural parts and instances of repentance, so fit to expiate or to cure them. But because they are beyond human care, they are to be cured by the Divine grace, and this is to be obtained by prayer. And this St. Clement advised in his epistle. Ἐξετείνατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Θεὸν, ἱκετεύοντες αὐτὸν ἵλεων γίνεσθαι, εἴ τι ἄκοντες ἡμάρτετε.—"Lift up your eyes to God Almighty, praying him to be merciful to you, if you have unwillingly fallen into error." And to the same purpose are the words of St. Austin: "Propter levia, sine quibus esse non possumus, oratio inventa;—For those lighter sins, without which we cannot be, prayer is invented as a remedy."[q]

59. IV. Perpetually watch, and perpetually resolve against them, as against any, never indulging to thyself leave to proceed in one. Let this care be constant and indefatigable, and leave the success to God. For in this there is a great difference between capital or deadly, and the more venial sins. For he that repents of great sins, does so resolve against them, that he ought really to believe that he shall never return to them again. No drunkard is truly to be esteemed a penitent, but he that in consideration of himself, his purpose, his reasons, and all his circumstances, is by the grace of God, confident that he shall never be drunk again. The reason is plain: for if he thinks that for all his resolution and repentance the case may happen, or will return, in which he shall be tempted above his strength, that is, above the efficacy of his resolution, then he hath not resolved against the sin in all its forms or instances: but he hath left some roots of bitterness which may spring up and defile him; he hath left some weak places, some parts unfortified, and does secretly purpose to give up his fort, if he be assaulted by some sort of enemies. He is not resolved to resist the importunity of a friend or a prevailing person, a prince, his landlord, or his master; that for the present he thinks impossible, and, therefore, owes his spiritual life to chance, or to

[p] Chap. vii. of Sins of Infirmity.

[q] De Symb. ad Catech. lib. i. c. 6; et lib. l. hom. 28.

the mercies of his enemy, who may have it for asking: but if he thinks it possible to resist any temptation, and resolves to do it if it be possible, the natural consequent of that is, that he thinks he shall never fall again into it. But if beforehand he thinks he shall relapse, he is then but an imperfect resolver, but a half-faced penitent. But this is not so in the case of smaller sins coming by ignorance or surprise, by inadvertency and imperfect notices, by the unavoidable weakness and imperfect condition of mankind. For he who in these resolves the strongest, knows that he shall not be innocent, but that he shall feel his weakness in the same or in other instances; and that this shall be his condition as long as he lives, that he shall always need to pray, "Forgive me my trespasses:" and even his not knowing concerning all actions, and all words, and all thoughts, whether they be sins or no, is a certain betraying him into a necessity of doing something for the pardon of which Christ died, for the preventing of which a mighty care is necessary, in the suffering of which he ought to be humbled, and for the pardon of which he ought for ever to pray. And, therefore, St. Chrysostom upon those words of St. Paul; "I am conscious in nothing," that is, I do not know of any failing in my ministry; saith, *καὶ τί δήποτε*;—"what then?" he is not hereby justified, *ὅτι συνέβαινεν ἡμαρτῆσθαι μὲν αὐτῷ τινὰ ἁμαρτήματα, καὶ μὴ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι ταῦτα ἁμαρτήματα*,—"because some sins might adhere to him, he not knowing that they were sins. "Ab occultis meis munda me, Domine," was an excellent prayer of David; —"Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret faults." "Hoc dicit, nequid fortè per ignorantiam deliquisset," saith St. Jerome; —"He prayed so, lest peradventure he should have sinned ignorantly." But of this I shall give a further account in describing the measures of 'sins of infirmity.' For the present, although this resolution against all, is ineffective as to a perfect immunity from small offences, yet it is accepted as really done, because it is done as it can possibly.

60. V. Let no man rely upon the catalogues which are sometimes given, and think that such things which the doctors have called venial sins, may with more facility be admitted, and with smaller portions of care be regarded, or with a slighter repentance washed off. For besides that some have called perjuries, anger, envy, injurious words, by lighter

names and titles of a little reproof, and, having lived in wicked times, were betrayed into easier sentences of those sins which they saw all mankind almost to practise, which was the case of some of the doctors who lived in the time of those wars which broke the Roman empire; besides this, I say, venial sins can rather be described[r] than enumerated. For none are so in their nature, but all that are so, are so by accident; and, according as sins tend to excuse, so they put on their degrees of veniality. No sin is absolutely venial, but in comparison with others: neither is any sin at all times and to all persons alike venial. And therefore, let no man venture upon it upon any mistaken confidence: they that think sins are venial in their own nature, cannot agree which are venial and which are not; and therefore, nothing is in this case so certain, as that all doctrine which does in any sense represent sins as harmless or tame serpents, is infinitely dangerous; and there is no safety, but by striving against all beforehand, and repenting of all as there is need.

61. I sum up these questions and these advices with the saying of Josephus: *Τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μεγάλοις παρανομεῖν ἰσοδύναμόν ἐστι.* "It is as damnable to indulge leave to ourselves to sin little sins as great ones:"[s] a man may be choked with a raisin, as well as with great morsels of flesh; and a small leak in a ship, if it be neglected, will as certainly sink her as if she sprung a plank. Death is the wages of all; and damnation is the portion of the impenitent, whatever was the instance of their sin. Though there are degrees of punishment, yet there is no difference of state, as to this particular: and therefore, we are tied to repent of all, and to dash the little Babylonians against the stones, against the rock that was smitten for us. For by the blood of Jesus, and the tears of repentance, and the watchfulness of a diligent, careful person, many of them shall be prevented, and all shall be pardoned.

A Psalm to be frequently used in our Repentance for our daily Sins.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me, for I am poor and needy: rejoice the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift my soul.

[r] See chap. vii. of Sins of Infirmity.

[s] *Εἰς τοὺς Μακκαβαίους.*

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee: teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.

Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.

How much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? Doth not their excellence which is in them, go away? They die even without wisdom.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them, there is great reward.

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults: keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing? But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice: O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips: take from me the way of lying; and cause thou me to make much of thy law.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness: he will not always be chiding, neither keepeth he his anger for ever.

Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof we are made: he remembereth that we are but dust.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: which forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

The Prayer.

O ETERNAL God, whose perfections are infinite, whose mercies are glorious, whose justice is severe, whose eyes are pure, whose judgments are wise; be pleased to look upon the infirmities of thy servant, and consider my weakness. My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak; I desire to please thee, but in my endeavours I fail so often, so foolishly, so unreasonably, that I extremely displease myself, and I have too great reason to fear, that thou also art displeased with thy servant. O my God, I know my duty, I resolve to do it; I know my dangers, I stand upon my guard against them; but when they come near, I begin to be pleased, and delighted in the little images of death, and am seized upon by folly, even when with greatest severity I decree against it. Blessed Jesus, pity me, and have mercy upon my infirmities.

II.

O dear God, I humbly beg to be relieved by a mighty grace, for I bear a body of sin and death about me; sin creeps upon me in every thing that I do or suffer. When I do well, I am apt to be proud; when I do amiss, I am sometimes too confident, sometimes affrighted: if I see others do amiss, I either neglect them, or grow too angry; and in the very mortification of my anger, I grow angry and peevish. My duties are imperfect, my repentances little, my passions great, my fancy trifling: the sins of my tongue are infinite, and my omissions are infinite, and my evil thoughts cannot be numbered, and I cannot give an account concerning innumerable portions of my time which were once in my power, but were let slip, and were partly spent in sin, partly thrown away upon trifles and vanity: and even of the basest sins, of which in accounts of men I am most innocent, I am guilty before thee, entertaining those sins in little instances, thoughts, desires, and imaginations, which I durst not produce into action and open significations. Blessed Jesus, pity me, and have mercy upon my infirmities.

III.

Teach me, O Lord, to walk before thee in righteousness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Give me an obedient will, a loving spirit, an humble understanding, watchfulness over my thoughts, deliberation in all my words and actions, well-tempered passions, and a great prudence, and a great zeal, and a great charity, that I may do my duty wisely, diligently, holily; O let me be humbled in my infirmities, but let me be also safe from my enemies; let me never fall by their violence, nor by my own weakness; let me never be overcome by them, nor yet give myself up to folly and weak principles, to idleness, and secure, careless walking; but give me the strengths of thy Spirit, that I may grow strong upon the ruins of the flesh, growing from grace to grace, till I become a perfect man in Christ Jesus. O let thy strength be seen in my weakness; and let thy merey triumph over my infirmities; pitying the condition of my nature, the infancy of grace, the imperfection of my knowledge, the transportation of my passion. Let me never consent to sin, but for ever strive against it, and every day prevail, till it be quite dead in me; that thy servant, living the life of grace, may at last be admitted to that state of glory, where all my infirmities shall be done away, and all tears be dried up, and sin and death shall be no more. Grant this, O most gracious God and Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

CHAPTER IV.

OF ACTUAL, SINGLE SINS, AND WHAT REPENTANCE IS PROPER TO THEM.

SECTION I.

I. The first part of conversion or repentance, is a quitting of all sinful habits, and abstaining from all criminal actions whatsoever.

> Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima
> Stultitiâ caruisse ——— [t].

[t] Hor. Ep. i. 1. 41.

For unless the Spirit of God rule in our hearts, we are none of Christ's: but he rules not where the works of the flesh are frequently, or maliciously, or voluntarily entertained. All the works of the flesh, and whatsoever leads to them, all that is contrary to the Spirit, and does either grieve or extinguish him, must be rescinded, and utterly taken away. Concerning which, it is necessary that I set down the[u] catalogues, which by Christ and his apostles are left us as lights and watch-towers, to point out the rocks and quicksands where our danger is: and this I shall the rather do, not only because they comprehend many evils which are not observed or feared; some which are commended, and many that are excused; but also because, although they are all marked with the same black character of death, yet there is some difference in the execution of the sentence, and in the degrees of their condemnation, and of the consequent repentance.

Evil Thoughts, or Discoursings.

2. Διαλογισμοὶ οἱ κακοὶ,—'evil reasonings.' Διαλογισμοὶ ἀδολεσχίαι, says Hesychius, that is, 'prating;' importune prattling and looseness of tongue, such as is usual with bold boys and young men; prating much and to no purpose. But our Bibles read it 'evil thoughts,' or 'surmisings;' for in Scripture it is συνεχὴς μελέτη; so Suidas observes concerning ἀδολεσχία, and ἀδολεσχήσω, that is, διηνεκῶς μελετήσω,—'to think long and carefully, to dwell in meditation upon a thing:' to which when our blessed Saviour adds κακοὶ,—'evil,' he notes and reproves such kind of morose thinkings and fancying of evil things: and it is not unlikely that he means thoughts of uncleanness, or lustful fancies. For διαλέγεσθαι, τὸ συνουσιάζειν, saith Suidas: ἐπὶ τὸ συνουσιάζειν, says Hesychius; it signifies such words as are prologues to wantonness: so διαλέγοιντο γύναιξιν in Aristophanes.

Τὴν μέν γε πρώτην διαλέγουσαν τὴν ὀπὴν
Κατέλαβον, ἣ τοῦ Πανός ἐστι ταὔλιον.[x]

So that here are forbidden all wanton words, and all morose delighting in venereous thoughts, all rollings and tossing such things in our mind. For even these defile the soul.

[u] Matt. xv. 19. Mark, vii. 21. Gal. v. 16, 19–21. Eph. iv. 31, &c.; v. 3–5. 2 Tim. iii. 2–5. Rom. i. 29–32. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Rev. xxi. 8. 1 Peter, iv. 3, 15.

[x] Lysistrat. 720. Brunck.

"Verborum obscœnitas, si turpitudo reum adhibeatur, ludus ne libero quidem homine dignus est," said Cicero:[y]—"Obscene words are a mockery not worthy of an ingenuous person." This is that μωρολογία, or εὐτραπελία, that "foolish talking and jesting," which St. Paul[z] joins to αἰσχρότης, that 'filthiness of communication,' which men make a jest of, but is indeed the basest in the world; the sign of a vile dishonest man: and it particularly noted the talk of mimics and parasites, buffoons and players, whose trade was to make sport, γελωτοποιοὶ, and they did use to do it with nastiness and filthy talkings: as is to be seen in Aristophanes, and is rarely described and severely reproved in St. Chrysostom, in his sixth homily upon St. Matthew. For "per verba dediscitur rerum pudor;" which St. Paul also affirms in the words of Menander,[a] Φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρήθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαὶ,—"Evil words corrupt good manners;" and evil thoughts, being the fountain of evil words, lie under the same prohibition. Under this head is the ὁ προπετὴς, ὁ πρόγλωσσος,—'a talkative, rash person,' "ready to speak, slow to hear;" against St. James's rule.

Inventors of Evil Things.

3. Contrivers of all such artifices as minister to vice. Curious inventions for cruelty, for gluttony, for lust; witty methods of drinking, wanton pictures, and the like; which for the likeness of the matter I have subjoined next to the κακοὶ διαλογισμοὶ, the 'evil thinkings' or 'surmises' reproved by our blessed Saviour, as these are expressly by St. Paul.

Πλεονεξίαι,—*Covetousness: or,*

4. Inordinate, unreasonable desires. For the word does not only signify the designing and contrivances of unjust ways of purchasing, which is not often separated from covetous desires: but the very 'studium habendi,' the thirst, or greediness, secret and impatient desires of having abundance: πλεονεξία, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πλείονος βλάβη,—'the hurt of immoderate lusting or desire;' and is sometimes applied to the matter of uncleanness; but in this catalogue I wholly separate it from this, because this is comprised under other

[y] Off. i. 29. 12. Heusinger.

[z] Εὐτραπελία, καταχρηστικῶς, pro μωρολογία. Eph. v. 4. [a] Cleric. p. 78.

words. Neither will it be hard to discern and to reprove this sin of desires in them that are guilty of it, though they will not think or confess what is and what is not abundance. For there is not easily to be found a greater testimony of covetousness, than the error concerning the measure of our possessions. He that is not easy to call that abundance, which by good and severe men is thought so, desires more than he should. Τὸ περισσεύειν τι τῇ ζωῇ, when any thing is 'over and above the needs of our life,' that is too much; and to desire that, is covetousness, saith St. Luke. Ὁρᾶτε καὶ φυλάσσεσθε ἀπὸ τῆς πλεονεξίας,—"Take heed, and keep yourselves from covetousness; for our life consisteth not in abundance;" intimating, that to desire more than our life needs, is to desire abundance, and that is covetousness; and that is the root of all evil: that is, all sins and all mischiefs can come from hence.

Divitis hoc vitium est auri, nec bella fuerunt,
Faginus adstabat quum scyphus ante dapes.[b]

There were no wars in those days when men did drink in a treen cup.

Πονηρίαι,—*Wickedness.*

This is the same that the Latins call 'malitia;' a scurvy, base disposition; aptness to do shrewd turns, to delight in mischiefs and tragedies; a loving to trouble our neighbour, and to do him ill offices; crossness, perverseness, and peevishness of action, in our intercourse. Πονηρία, ὁ ἐκ παρασκευῆς εἰς τινὰ παρὰ τοῦ πόνος γινόμενος, saith Suidas. 'Facessere negotium alicui;' to do a man an evil office, or 'to put him to trouble.' And to this is reducible that which St. Paul calls κακοήθειαν,—'malignity;' a baseness of nature by which we take things by the wrong handle, and expounding things always in the worst sense. 'Vitiositas' is the Latin word for it, and it seems to be worse than the former, by being a more general principle of mischief. "Malitia certi cujusdam vitii est: vitiositas, omnium," said Cicero:[c]—"This is, in a man's nature, a universal depravation of his spirit; that is in manners, and is sooner cured than this."

Κακία,—*Craftiness.*

6. That is, a willingness and aptness to deceive; a studying

[b] Tibul. i. 10. 7. Heyn. Wunderlick. p. 119. [c] Tuscul. iv. 15. Davis.

by some underhand trick to overreach our brother: like that of Corax's scholar, he cozened his master with a trick of his own art; Κακοῦ κόρακος, κακὸν ὠὸν,—"A crafty crow laid a crafty egg." By which is not signified that natural or acquired sagacity, by which men can contrive wittily, or be too hard for their brother, if they should endeavour it: but a studying how to circumvent him, and a habitual design of getting advantage upon his weakness; a watching him where he is most easy and apt for impression, and then striking him upon the unarmed part. But this is brought to effect, by

Deceit.

7. "Cum aliud simulatur, aliud agitur alterius decipiendi causâ," said Ulpian and Aquilius; that is, 'all dissembling to the prejudice of thy neighbour,' ἡ ἐπὶ λυμῇ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπιβουλή τε καὶ μηχανή; any thing designed to thy neighbour's disadvantage by simulation or dissimulation.

Ἀσέλγεια,—*Uncleanness.*

8. 'Stinking:' so the Syriac interpreter renders it; and it means 'obscene actions.' But it signifies all manner of excess or immoderation; and so may signify πολυτέλειαν—'prodigal or lavish expenses,' and immoderate use of permitted pleasures, even the excess of liberty in the use of the marriage-bed. For the ancients use the word not only for 'unchaste,' but for 'great,' and 'excessive.' Πίονές εἰσιν ἀσελγῶς,—'They are exceeding fat:'—and a goat with great horns is called ἀσελγοκέρως. It is 'luxuria,' or the excess of desire in the matter of pleasures. Every excess is ἀσέλγεια, it is 'intemperance:' ἀκαθαρσία signifies a special kind of crime under this. It means all voluntary pollutions of the body, or

Wantonness.

9. That is, all tempting, foolish gestures; such which Juvenal reproves,

Chironomon Ledam molli saltante Bathyllo,[d]

which being presented in the theatre would make the vestal wanton. Every thing by which a man or woman is κακὸς τὰ

[d] Juv. vi. 63. Rupert.

ἐρωτικὰ,—'abominable in their lusts;' to which the τὰ ἄῤῥητα, —'the lusts not to be named' are reducible; amongst which St. Paul reckons the "effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind;" that is, they that do, and they that suffer, such things. Philoctetes and Paris; Cæsar and the king of Pontus. 'Mollities,' or 'softness,' is the name by which this vice is known, and the persons guilty of it are also called the ἐβδελυγμένοι,—"the abominable."[e]

Hatred.

10. Ἔχθραι καὶ θυμοὶ· great, but transient angers. The cause, and the degree, and the abode, make the anger criminal. By these two words are forbidden all violent passion, fury, revengefulness. Ἐχθρὸς ὁ ἐκδικήτης,—"The enemy and the avenger," says David. But not this only, but the misliking and hating of a man, though without actual designs of hurting him, is here noted; that is, when men retain the displeasure, and refuse to converse, or have any thing to do with the man, though there be from him no danger of damage, the former experiment being warning enough. The forbearing to salute him, to be kind or civil to him, and every degree of anger that is kept, is an ἔχθρα, a part of 'enmity' or 'hatred.' To this are reduced the unmerciful; that is, such as use their right in extreme severity towards servants and malefactors, criminal or obnoxious persons;—and the implacable, that is a degree beyond; such who, being once offended, will take no satisfaction, but the utmost and extremest forfeiture.

Debate, Contentions.

11. That is, all striving in words or actions, scolding and quarrels, in which as commonly both parties are faulty when they enter, so it is certain they cannot go forth from them without having contracted the guilt of more than one sin: whither is reduced clamour, or loud expressions of anger: "Clamour is the horse of anger," said St. Chrysostom, "anger rides upon it; throw the horse down, and the rider will fall to the ground." Blasphemy;—'backbiting'[f] we read it; but the Greek signifies all words that are injurious to God or man.

[e] John, xxi. 8. [f] Eph. iv. 31.

Whisperers.

12. That is, such who are apt to do shrewd turns in private; a speaking evil of our neighbour in a man's ear; "Hic nigræ succus loliginis, hæc est Ærugo mera;"[g] this is an arrow that flieth in the dark; it wounds secretly, and no man can be warned of it. Καταλάλους,—'backbiters;' it is the same mischief, but it speaks out a little more than the other; and it denotes such who pretend friendship and society, but yet traduce their friend, or accuse him secretly; καινὸς τρόπος διαβολῆς τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι, as Polybius calls it; 'a new way of accusation, to undermine a man by praising him,' that you seeming his friend, a lover of his virtue and his person, by praising him may be the more easily believed in reporting his faults: like him in Horace, who was glad to hear any good of his old friend Capitolinus, whom he knew so well, who had so kindly obliged him,

> Sed tamen admiror quo pacto judicium illud
> Fugerit:[h]

"but yet I wonder that he escaped the judge's sentence in his criminal cause." There is a louder kind of this evil, ὑβρισταὶς,—'railers;' that is, when the smoke is turned into a flame, and breaks out; it is the same iniquity with another circumstance: it is the vice of women and boys, and rich, imperious fools, and hard, rude masters to their servants, and it does too often infect the spirit and language of a governor. Our Bibles read this word, by 'despiteful;' that notes an aptness to speak spiteful words, cross and untoward, such which we know will do mischief or displease.

Foolishness.

13. Which we understand by the words of St. Paul; "Be not foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is:"[i] it means, a neglect of inquiring into holy things; a wilful or careless ignorance of the best things, a not studying our religion, which indeed is the greatest folly and sottishness, it being a neglecting of our greatest interests, and of the most excellent notices, and it is the fountain of many impure emanations. A Christian must not be ἀσυνετὸς, he must not call 'fool,' nor be 'a fool.'—'Heady,' is reduced to this, and

[g] Hor. s. i. 4. 100. [h] Ibid. [i] Eph. v. 17. Prov. xxiv. 9.

signifies rash and indiscreet in assenting and dissenting; people that speak and do foolishly, because they speak and do without deliberation.

Pride.

14. Καταφόνησίς τις πλὴν αὐτοῦ τῶν ἄλλων'—'a despising of others, if compared with ourselves:' so Theophrastus[k] calls it. Concerning which we are to judge ourselves by the voices of others, and by the consequent actions observable in ourselves: any thing whereby we overvalue ourselves, or despise others; preferring ourselves, or depressing them in unequal places or usages, is the signification of this vice; which no man does heartily think himself guilty of, but he that is not; that is, the humble man. A particular of this sin is that which is in particular noted by the apostle, under the name of ἀλαζονεία,—'arrogance,' or 'bragging;' which includes pride and hypocrisy together: for so Plato defines it to be, ἕξις προσποιητικὴ τῶν ἀγαθῶν μὴ ὑπαρχόντων,—'a pretending to excellences which we have not;' a desiring to seem good, but a carelessness of being so; reputation and fame, not goodness, being the design. To this may be referred 'emulations;' ζῆλοι, so the apostle calls them; 'zeals,' it signifies immoderate love to a lawful object: like that of the wife of Ajax in Sophocles:

—— ἴδετε τὴν ὀμευνέτιν
Αἴαντος, ὃς μέγιστον ἴσχυσε στρατοῦ,
Οἵας λατρείας ἀνθ' ὅσου ζήλου τρέφει![1]

She did him most strange, zealous services, as if her affection had no measure. It signifies also violent desires of equalling or excelling another for honour's sake, ambition and envy mixed together: it is a violent pursuit after a thing that deserves it not. A consequent of these is,

Διχοστασίαι, αἱρέσεις,—*Seditions, or Schisms and Heresies.*

15. That is, divisions in the Church upon diversity of opinions, or upon pride, faction, and interest, as in choosing bishops, in prelations and governments ecclesiastical, from factious rulers, or factious subjects; which are properly 'schisms,' "but use commonly to belch forth into heresy:"

[k] Κεφ. κδ'. Astii. p. 29.

[1] Ajax. 501. Lobeck. p. 29.

according to that saying, "Plerumque schisma in hæresin eructat."

An Evil Eye.

16. That is, a repining at the good of others; 'envy,' a not rejoicing in the prosperity of our neighbours; a grieving because he grieves not. "Aut illi nescio quid incommodi accidit, aut nescio cui aliquid boni:" When good happens to another, it is as bad as if evil happens to himself.

Ὦ τῆς μεγίστης τοῦ φθόνου πονηρίας·
Τὸν εὐτυχῆ μισεῖ τις, ὃν θεὸς φιλεῖ.[m]

'This is one of the worst of crimes, for a man to hate him that is prosperous; hate him whom God loves or blesses.'—It bears part of its punishment along with it: the sin hath in it no pleasure, but very much torment.

"Nam sese excruciat qui beatis invidet."

A part of this is unthankfulness:[n] those who do not return kindnesses to others, from whom they have received any, neither are apt to acknowledge them: which is properly an envying to our friend the noblest of all graces, that of charity; or it is pride or covetousness, for from any of these roots this equivocal issue can proceed.

Lovers of Pleasures.

17. Such who study and spend their time and money to please their senses;

—— Rarum, ac memorabile magni
Gutturis exemplum, conducendusque magister:[o]

Rare epicures and gluttons, such which were famous in the Roman luxury, and fit to be presidents of a Greek symposiac, not for their skill in philosophy, but their witty arts of drinking.

Ingeniosa gula est. Siculo scarus æquore mersus
Ad mensam vivus perducitur[p] ——

'Sensual men:'—Such who are dull, and unaffected with the things of God, and transported with the lusts of the lower belly; persons that are greedy of baser pleasures.[q] Ὁ ἄδικος αὐτῷ πλέον τῶν ἡδέων νέμει, said the scholiast upon

[m] Stob. Floril. tit. 38. [n] 2 Tim. iii. 2. [o] Juv. ii. 113. Rupert.
[p] Petron. c. 119. Anton. p. 371. [q] Alex. Aphrod. in lib. de Anim.

Aristotle: "The wicked man allows to himself too large a portion of sweet things." Liquorishness is the common word to express this vice in the matter of eating and drinking.

Busybodies.

18. That is, such who invade the offices, or impertinently obtrude their advice and help, when there is no need, and when it is not liked, nor out of charity, but of curiosity, or of a trifling spirit: and this produces 'talking of others,' and makes their conversation a scene of censure and satire against others; never speaking of their own duty, but often to the reproach of their neighbours, something that may lessen or disparage him.

The Fearful, and the Unbelievers.

19. That is, they that fear man more than God, that will do any thing, but suffer nothing, that fall away in persecution; such who dare not trust the promises, but fear want, and fear death, and trust not God with cheerfulness, and joy, and confidence.

Συνευδοκοῦντες τοῖς πράσσουσι,—*They that take pleasure in those that do these things.*

20. That is, they who in any sense encourage, or promote, or love the sin of another, are guilty themselves; not of the other's sin, but of their own. He that commands a man to swear, is not guilty of that swearing, but of that commanding him. It is a sin to do so; but that sin to which the man is encouraged, or tempted, or assisted, is his own sin, and for it he is to repent; every man for his own. For it is inartificially said by the masters of moral theology, that by many ways we are guilty of the sins of others: by many ways indeed we can procure them to sin: and every such action of ours is a sin, against charity and the matter of that commandment in which the temptation was instanced: but their sin is not ours; their sin does not properly load us, neither does our being author of it excuse them. It was the case of Adam and Eve, and the serpent, who yet did every one bear their own burden. Aristotle, Zeno, and Chrysippus, were notorious in this kind. "Non est enim immunis à scelere, qui ut fieret imperavit, nec est alienus a crimine, cujus consensu licèt a se non admissum crimen, tamen publice legitur," said

St. Cyprian.[r] He that commands, and he that consents, and he that delights, and he that commends, and he that maintains, and he that counsels, and he that tempts, or conceals, or is silent in another's danger, when his speaking will prevent it, is guilty before God. "Corrumpere, et corrumpi sæculum vocatur." This evil is of a great extent, but receives its degrees according to the influence or causality it hath in the sins of others. 21. These I have noted and explicated, because they are not so notorious as others, which have a public name, and filthy character, and easy definition: such as, adulteries, fornication, drunkenness, idolatry, hating of God and good men, perjury, malicious lies, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, as St. Paul adds, "and such-like;"[s] these, and those, and all that are like these, exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. They are the works of the flesh; but these which are last reckoned are such which all the world condemns, and they are easily discerned, as smoke, or a cloud upon the face of the sun: but the other are sometimes esteemed innocent, often excused, commonly neglected, always undervalued. But concerning all these, the sentence is sad and decretory. "They that are such, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven:"[t] but "they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."[u] Now if we list to observe it, many of these are such which occur so frequently in our daily conversation, are so little noted and so confidently practised, that to try men concerning their hopes of heaven by such measures, would seem strange and hard: but it is our faults that it is so; these are the measures of the sanctuary, and not to be prejudged by later and looser customs.

SECTION II.

Whether every single Act of these Sins puts a Man out of God's Favour.

22. In this question, by a single act, I mean, a deliberate act, a wilful, observed, known act; for concerning acts by surprise, by incogitancy, by imperfection, I shall give a special

[r] Epist. xxi. [s] Gal. v. 21. [t] 1 Cor. vi. 10. [u] Rev. xxi. 8.

account in a chapter on purpose. To this, therefore, I answer by several propositions.

23. I. There are some acts of sin so vile and mischievous, that they cannot be acted but by a great malice or depravation of the will; and do suppose a man to be gone a great way from God before he can presumptuously or wilfully commit any of them; such as are idolatry, wilful murder, adultery, witchcraft, perjury, sacrilege, and the like: such which by reason of their evil effect are called "peccata clamantia ad Dominum,—crying sins;" as, oppressing widows, —entering into the fields of the fatherless,—killing a man by false accusation,—grinding the face of the poor,—some sort of unnatural lusts: or such which by reason of their scandal, and severe prohibitions of them, and their proper baseness and unholiness, are "peccata vastantia conscientiam,— they lay a man's conscience waste;" such are all these that I have now reckoned. Now concerning every one of these there is amongst wise and good men no question, but every act of them is exclusive of a man from all his hopes of heaven, unless he repent timely and effectually. For every act of these is such as a man cannot be surprised in the commission of it; he can have no ignorance, no necessity, no infirmity, to lessen or excuse his fault; which, because it is very mischievous in the event, expressly and severely, and by name forbidden, is also against holiness, and against charity, against God, and against the commandment, so apparently, that there is nothing to lessen them into the neighbourhood of an excuse, if he that commits them have a clear use of reason. Some acts of other sins are such, which as they are innocent of doing mischief to our neighbour, so they are forbidden only in general; but concerning the particular there is not any express certainty, as in drunkenness; which though every Christian knows to be forbidden, yet concerning every particular act, it is not always so certain that it is drunkenness, because the acts partake of more and less; which is not true in murder, in adultery, apostasy, witchcraft, and the like: besides which, in some of the forbidden instances there are some degrees of surprise, even when there are some degrees of presumption and deliberation, which in others there cannot be. Upon which considerations it is apparent, that the single acts of these greater

sins are equal to a habit in others, and are, for the present, destructive of the state of God's favour, a man that does them, is in the state of damnation, till he hath repented; that is, no good man can do one of these acts, and be a good man still; he is a wicked person, and an enemy of God, if he does.

24. II. This is apparent in those acts which can be done but once; as in parricide, or murdering our father or mother, and in the wilful murder of ourself. There can be no habit of these sins; all their malignity is spent in one act: and the event is best declared by one of them; the man dies in his sin, in that sin which excludes him from heaven. Every act of these sins is like the stinging of bees;

—— Animamque in vulnere ponunt;

He cannot strike again, he can sin that sin over no more; and therefore it is a single act that damns in that case. Now though it is by accident that these sins can be but once acted, yet it is not by accident that these single acts destroy the soul, but by their malice and evil effect, their mischief or uncharitableness: it follows therefore, that it is so in all the single acts of these great crimes; for since they that cannot be habitual, yet are highly damnable; the evil sentence is upon every act of these greater crimes.

25. III. Concerning the single acts of other sins which are not so highly criminal, yet have a name in the catalogues of condemned sins, the sentence in Scripture is the same; the penalty extreme, the fine is the whole interest: St. Paul, in his Epistle[x] to the Corinthians, seems only to condemn the habit, "Thieves, drunkards, covetous, railers, &c., shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven."—Now one act does not make them properly such; a habit, not an act, denominates. But lest this be expounded to be a permission to commit single acts, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians,[y] affixes the same penalty to the actions as to the habits; τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες,—"they that do such things;" that is, the actions of those sins are damnable, and exclusive from heaven as verily as the habits. And, however, in moral accounts, or in Aristotle's "Ethics," a man is not called by the name of a single action, yet in all laws both of God and man he is

[x] 1 Cor. vi. 10. [y] Gal. v. 21.

He that steals once is a thief, in the courts of God and the king: and one act of adultery makes a man an adulterer; so that by this measure, they that 'are such,' and they that 'do such' things, mean the same; and the effect of both is exclusion from the kingdom of heaven.

26. IV. Single actions in Scripture are called, 'works of darkness,' 'deeds of the body,' 'works of the flesh;'[z] and though they do not reign, yet if they enter, they disturb the rest and possession of the Spirit of grace: and therefore are in their several measures against the holiness of the Gospel of Christ. All sins are single in their acting; and a sinful habit differs from a sinful act, but as many differ from one, or as a year from an hour: a vicious habit is but one sin continued or repeated; for as a sin grows from little to great, so it passes from act to habit: a sin is greater, because it is complicated externally or internally, no other way in the world; it is made up of more kinds, or more degrees of choice; and when two or three crimes are mixed in one action, then the sin is loud and clamorous: and if these still grow more numerous, and not interrupted and disjoined by a speedy repentance, then it becomes a habit. As the continuation of an instant or its perpetual flux makes time and proper succession, so does the reacting or the continuing in any one or more sins make a habitual sinner. So that in this question, the answer for one will serve for the other: wherever the habit is forbidden, there also the act is criminal and against God, damnable by the laws of God, and actually damning without repentance. Between sins great and little, actual and habitual, there is no difference of nature or formality, but only of degrees.

27. V. And, therefore, the words that represent the state of sin, are used indifferently both for acts and habits. Ποιεῖν signifies to do single acts, and by aggravation only can signify a habitual sinner: Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν—"He that commits sin, is of the devil;" so St. John:[a] by which, although he means especially him that commits sin frequently or habitually — for where there is greater reason, there is the stronger affirmative — yet that he must also mean it of single sins is evident, not only by the nature of the thing, some single acts in some instances being as mischievous

[z] Ephes. viii. Rom. viii. 13. [a] 1 John, iii. 8.

and malicious as a habit in others; but by the words of our blessed Saviour, that the "devil is the father of lies;" and therefore, every one that tells a lie, is of the devil; 'eatenus.' To which add also the words of St. John explicating his whole design in these and all his other words; "These things I write unto you, that ye might not sin," that is, that ye might not do sinful actions; for it cannot be supposed, that he did not as verily intend to prevent every sin, as any sin, or that he would only have men to beware of habitual sins, and not of actual, single sins, without which caution he could never have prevented the habitual. To do sin is to do one, or to do many; and are both forbidden under the same danger.

28. The same manner of expression in a differing matter hath a different signification. To do sin is to do any one act of it; but to do righteousness is to do it habitually. 'He that doeth sin,' that is, one act of sin, 'is of the devil;' but 'he that doeth righteousness,' viz. habitually, 'he only is righteous.' The reason of the difference is this, because one sin can destroy a man, but one act of virtue cannot make him alive. As a phial is broken, though but a piece of its lip be cut away; but it is not whole, unless it be entire and unbroken in every part. "Bonum ex integrâ causâ, malum ex qualibet particulari."[b] And, therefore, since 'he that does righteousness,' in St. John's phrase,[c] 'is righteous;' and yet no man is righteous for doing one act of righteousness; it follows, that by doing righteousness he must mean doing it habitually. But because one blow can kill a man or wound him desperately; therefore, when St. John speaks of 'doing sin,' he means doing any sin, any way, or in any degree of act or habit. For this is that we are commanded by the Spirit of Christ; we must περιπατεῖν ἀκριβῶς,—"walk exactly, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature, ἅγιοι καὶ ἄμωμοι,—holy and unblamable;"[d] so must the Church be; that is, so must be all the faithful, or the men and women of the Christian Church; for the Church is nothing but a congregation or collective body of believing persons; Christ, therefore, intending to represent the Church to God 'without spot, or wrinkle, or fault;' intends that all his servants should be so. For, let no man deceive himself.

[b] Dionys. de Divin. Nomin. [c] Eph. v. 15, 27. [d] Cæsar. Arelat. hom. xvi

"Omnis homo, qui post baptismum, mortalia crimina commiserit; hoc est, homicidium, adulterium, furtum, falsum testimonium, vel reliqua crimina perpetravit, unde per legem mundanam mori poterat, si pœnitentiam non egerit, eleemosynam justam non fecerit, nunquam habebit vitam æternam, sed cum diabolo descendet ad inferna:—Every man who, after his baptism, hath committed mortal or killing sins, that is to say, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, or any other crimes which are capital by human laws, if he does not repent, if he does not give just measures of alms, he shall not have eternal life, but with the devil he shall descend into hell."[d] This is the sad sentence against all single acts of sin in the capital or greater instances.

28. But upon this account who can be justified? Who can hope for heaven, since even the most righteous man that is, sinneth; and by single acts of unworthiness interrupts his course of piety, and pollutes his spirit? If a single act of these great or mortal sins can stand with the state of grace, then not acts of these but habits are forbidden, and these only shut a man from heaven. But if one single act destroys the state of grace, and puts a man out of God's favour, then no man abides in it long: and what shall be at the end of these things?

29. To this I answer, that single acts are continually forbidden, and in every period of their commission displease God, and provoke him to anger. To abide in any one sin, or to do it often, or to love it, is against the covenant of the Gospel, and the essence and nature of repentance, which is a conversion from sin to righteousness: but every single act is against the cautions and watchfulness of repentance. It is an act of death, but not a state; it is the way of death, but is not in the possession of it. It is true that every single act of fornication merits an eternal hell; yet when we name it to be a single act, we suppose it to be no more, that is, to be rescinded and immediately cut off by a vigorous and proportionable repentance: if it be not, it is more than a single act, for it is a habit, as I shall remonstrate in the chapter of habits. But, then, upon this account, a single act of any sin may be incident to the state of a good man, and yet not destroy his interests or his hopes; but it is upon no other

[d] Cæsar. Arelat. hom. xvi.

ground but this,—it is a single act, and it does not abide there, but passes immediately into repentance: and then though it did interrupt or discompose the state of grace or the Divine favour, yet it did not destroy it quite. The man may pray David's prayer: "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments."[e]

30. So that if a man asks whether a good man, falling into one act of these great sins, still remains a good man? the answer is to be made upon this consideration;—he is a good man that is so sorry for his sin, and so hates it, that he will not abide in it: and this is the best indication, that in the act there was something very pitiable, because the man's affections abide not there; the good man was smitten in a weak part, or in an ill hour, and then repents: for such is our goodness; to need repentance daily for smaller things, and too often for greater things. But, be they great or little, they must be speedily repented of; and he that does so is a good man still. Not but that the single act is highly damnable, and exclusive of heaven, if itself were not excluded from his affections: but it does not the mischief, because he does not suffer it to proceed in finishing that death, which it would have effected if the poison had not been speedily expelled before it had seized upon a vital part.

31. But, secondly, I answer, that being in the state of grace is a phrase of the schools, and is of a large and almost infinite comprehension. Every Christian is in some degree in the state of grace, so long as he is invited to repentance, and so long as he is capable of the prayers of the Church. This we learn from those words of St. John,[f] "All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death;" that is, some sorts of sins are so incident to the condition of men and their state of imperfection, that the man who hath committed them is still within the methods of pardon, and hath not forfeited his title to the promises and covenant of repentance: but there is a sin unto death; that is, some men proceed beyond the measures and economy of the Gospel, and the usual methods and probabilities of repentance, by obstinacy, and persevering in sin, by a wilful, spiteful resisting, or despising the offers of grace and the means of pardon; for such a man

[e] Psalm cxix. ult. [f] 1 John, v. 17.

St. John does not encourage us to pray: if he be such a person as St. John described, our prayers will do him no good; but because no man can tell the last minute or period of pardon, nor just when a man is gone beyond the limit; and because the limit itself can be enlarged, and God's mercies stay for some longer than for others, therefore St. John left us under this indefinite restraint and caution; which was decretory enough to represent that sad state of things in which the refractory and impenitent have immerged themselves, and yet so indefinite and cautious, that we may not be too forward in applying it to particulars, nor in prescribing measures to the Divine mercy, nor passing final sentences upon our brother, before we have heard our Judge himself speak. 'Sinning a sin not unto death,' is an expression fully signifying, that there are some sins, which, though they be committed, and displease God, and must be repented of, and need many and mighty prayers for their pardon, yet the man is in the state of grace and pardon; that is, he is within the covenant of mercy; he may be admitted to repentance, if he will return to his duty: so that being in the state of grace, is having a title to God's loving-kindness, a not being rejected of God, but a being beloved by him to certain purposes of mercy, and that hath these measures and degrees.

32. I. A wicked Christian that lives vilely, and yet is called to repentance by the vigorous and fervent sermons of the Gospel, is in a state of grace,—of this grace. God would fain save him, willing he is and desirous he should live; but his mercy to him goes but thus far, that he still continues the means of his salvation; he is angry with him, but not finally. The Jews were in some portions of this state until the final day came, in which God would not be merciful any more: "Even in this thy day, O Jerusalem," said our blessed Saviour; so long as their day lasted, their state of grace lasted; God had mercy for them, if they had had gracious hearts to receive it.

33. II. But he that begins to leave his sins, and is in a continual contestation against them, and yet falls often, even most commonly, at the return of the temptation, and sin does in some measure prevail; he is in a state of further grace, nearer to pardon, as he is nearer to holiness; his hopes are greater and nearer to performance; "He is not far

from the kingdom of heaven," so our blessed Lord expressed the like condition; he is τεταγμένος εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον,—"ordered, disposed towards life eternal:" and this is a further approach towards the state of life.

34. He that loves no sin, but hath overcome his affections to all, and hates all, but yet with so imperfect a choice or aversation, that his faith is weak, and his repentance like an infant; this man is in a better state than both the former: 'God will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed;' God hath in some measure prevailed upon him: and as God is ready to receive the first unto the means, and the second unto the grace, of repentance; so this third he is ready to receive unto pardon, if he shall grow and persevere in grace. And these are the several stages and periods of being in the state of grace.

I. With the first of these not only an act, but a habit of sin is consistent; but how long and how far, God only knows.

II. With the second period a frequency of falling into single sins is consistent: but if he comes not out of this state, and proceed to the third period, he will relapse to the first: he must not stay here long.

III. But they that are in the third period, do sometimes fall into single sins, but it is but seldom, and it is without any remanent portion of affection, but not without much displeasure and a speedy repentance; and to this person the proper remedy is to grow in grace: for if he does not, he cannot either be secure of the present, or confident of the future.

35. IV. But then if, by being in the state of grace, is meant, a being actually pardoned and beloved of God unto salvation,—so that if a man dies so, he shall be saved,—it is certain that every deliberate sin, every act of sin that is considered and chosen, puts a man out of the state of grace; that is, the act of sin is still upon his account, he is not actually pardoned in that for any other worthiness of state, or relation of person; he must come to new accounts for that; and if he dies without a moral retractation of it, he is in a sad condition, if God should deal with him 'summo jure,' that is, "be extreme to mark that which was done amiss." The single act is highly damnable; the 'wages of it are death,' it 'defiles a man;' it excludes from heaven, it 'grieves the

Holy Spirit of grace,' it is against his undertaking, and in its own proportion against all his hopes: if it be not pardoned, it will bear the man to hell; but then how it comes to be pardoned in good men, and by what measures of favour and proper dispensation, are next to be considered. Therefore,

36. V. Though, by the nature of the thing and the laws of the covenant, every single deliberate act of sin provokes God to anger, who therefore may punish it by the severest laws which he decreed against it; yet by the economy of God and the Divine dispensation it is sometimes otherwise. For besides the eternal wrath of God, there are some that suffer his temporal; some suffer both; some but one. God uses to smite them whom he would make to be, or them who are, his sons, if they do amiss. If a wicked man be smitten with a temporal judgment, and then begins to fear God and to return, the anger will go no further; and therefore, much rather shall such temporal judgments upon the good man, that was "overtaken in a fault," be the whole exaction. God smites them that sin these single sins, and though he could take all, yet will demand but a fine.

37. VI. But even this also God does not do, but in the case of scandal or danger to others: as it was in the particular of David, "Because thou hast made the enemies of God to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall die:" or else, 2. When the good man is negligent of his danger, or dilatory in his repentance, and careless in his watch, then God awakens him with a judgment, sent with much mercy.

38. VII. But sometimes a temporal death happens to good men so overtaken: it happened so to Moses and Aaron for their fault at the waters of Massah and Meribah; to the prophet of Judah, that came to cry out against the altar in Bethel; to Uzzah, for touching the ark with unhallowed fingers, though he did it in zeal; to the Corinthians, who had not observed decent measures in receiving the holy sacrament; and thus it happened, say some of the ancient doctors, to Ananias and Sapphira; God took a fine of them also, "salvo contenemento,—their main stake being secured."

—— Culpam hanc miserorum morte piabant.

There is in these instances this difference: Moses and Aaron

were not smitten in their sin, but for it, and (as is not doubted) after they had repented: but Uzzah, and the prophet, and Ananias and Sapphira, and the Corinthians, died not only *for* their sin, but *in* it too: and yet it is hoped God's anger went no further than that death, because in every such person who lives well, and yet is overtaken in a fault, there is much of infirmity and imperfection of choice, even when there are some degrees of wilfulness and a wicked heart. And though it be easy to suppose that such persons in the beginning of that judgment, and the approach of that death, did morally retract the sinful action by an act of repentance, and that upon that account they found the effect of the Divine mercies by the blood of the Lamb, who was slain from the beginning of the world; yet if it should happen that any of them die so suddenly, as not to have power to exercise one act of repentance, though the case be harder,—yet it is to be hoped that even the habitual repentance and hatred of sin, by which they pleased God in the greater portions of their life, will have some influence upon this also. But this case is but seldom, and God's mercies are very great and glorious; but because there is in this case no warrant, and this case may happen oftener than it does, even to any one that sins one wilful sin, it is enough to all considering persons to make them fear: "but the fool sinneth and is confident."

39. VIII. But if such overtaken persons do live, then God's dispensation is all mercy, even though he strikes the sinner, for he does it for good. For God is merciful, and knows our weaknesses, our natural and circumstant follies: he therefore recalls the sinning man, he strikes him sharply, or he corrects him gently, or he calls upon him hastily, as God pleases, or as the man needs. The man is fallen from the favour or grace of God, but (I say) fallen only from one step of grace, and God is more ready to receive him than the man is to return; and provided that he repent speedily, and neither add a new crime, nor neglect this, his state of grace was but allayed and disordered, not broken in pieces or destroyed.

40. IX. I find this thing rarely well discoursed of by some of the ancient doctors of the Church. Tertullian's[g] words are excellent words to this purpose: "Licet perisse dicatur,

[g] Lib. de Pudicit. c. vii.

erit et de perditionis genere retractare, quia et ovis non moriendo, sed errando,—et drachma non intereundo, sed latitando, perierunt. Ita licet dici perisse quod salvum est:—That may be said to be lost which is missing: and the sheep that went astray was also lost; and so was the groat, which yet was but laid aside, it was so lost that it was found again. And thus that may be said to have perished, which yet is safe."—"Perit igitur et fidelis, elapsus in spectaculum quadrigarii furoris et gladiatorii cruoris, et scenicæ fœditatis, Xysticæ vanitatis,—in lusus, in convivia sæcularis solennitatis,—in officium, in ministerium alienæ idololatriæ aliquas artes adhibuit curiositatis,—in verbum ancipitis negotiationis impegit, ob tale quid extra gregem datus est: vel et ipse fortè irâ, tumore, æmulatione, quod denique sæpe fit, dedignatione castigationis abrupit,—debet requiri atque revocari:—The Christian is, in some sort, perished, who sins by beholding bloody or unchaste spectacles, who ministers to the sins of others; who offends by anger, emulation, rage, and swelling, too severe animadversions; this man must be sought for and called back;" but this man is not quite lost.—"Quod potest recuperari, non perit, nisi foris perseveravit. Benè interpretaberis parabolam, viventem adhuc revocans peccatorem.—That which may be recovered, is but as it were lost, unless it remains abroad, and returns not to the place from whence it wandered."

41. To the same purpose St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose discourse of the parable of him that fell among the thieves, and was wounded and half dead. Such are they who, in times of persecution, fell away into dissimulation. "Nec putemus mortuos esse, sed magis semianimes jacere eos, quos persecutione funestâ sauciatos videmus; qui si in totum mortui essent, nunquam de eisdem postmodùm et confessores et martyres fierent:[h] For if these were quite dead, you should not find of them to return to life, and to become martyrs and confessors for that faith," which, through weakness, they did seemingly abjure. These men, therefore, were but "wounded and half dead:" for they still keep the faith, they preserve their title to the covenant, and the promises of the Gospel, and the grace of repentance. "Quam fidem qui habet, vitam habet," saith St. Ambrose;[i] "He that hath this faith hath life;"

[h] De Lapsis ad Anton. 52. [i] Lib. i. de Pœnit. c. 10.

that is, he is not excluded from pardon; whom, therefore, peradventure the good Samaritan does not pass by, because he finds there is life in him, some principle by which he may live again. Now as it was in the matter of faith, so it is of charity and the other graces. Every act of sin takes away something from the contrary grace; but if the root abides in the ground, the plant is still alive, and may bring forth fruit again. "But he only is dead who hath thrown God off for ever, or entirely with his very heart:" so St. Ambrose. To be "dead in trespasses and sins," which is the phrase of St. Paul,[k] is the same with that expression of St. John, of "sinning a sin unto death," that is, habitual, refractory, pertinacious, and incorrigible sinners, in whom there is scarce any hope or sign of life. These are they upon whom, as St. Paul's[l] expression is, "the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost;" εἰς τὸ τέλος,—"unto death;" so was their sin, it was a sin unto death; so is their punishment.

The result of these considerations is this. He that commits one act of a wilful sin, hath provoked God to anger; which whether it will be final or no, we cannot know but by the event, by his forbearing us, and calling us, and accepting us to repentance. One act does not destroy the life of grace utterly, but wounds it more or less, according to the vileness and quantity, or abode in the sin.

SECTION III.

What Repentance is necessary for single Acts of Sin.

42. I. Upon consideration of the premises, it appears to be dangerous practically to inquire how far single acts of sin can stand with the state of grace, or the being of a good man. For they ought not to be at all, and if they be once, we must repent, and the sin must be pardoned, or we die: and when it can be asked how far any sin can be consistent with the state of God's favour, it cannot be meant that God indulges it to a good man with impunity, or that his grace and favour consist in this, that he may safely sin,

[k] Eph. ii. 1. [l] 1 Thess. ii. 16.

once or twice, in what instance or in any instance he shall choose: but in this it does; a single act of sin does not so destroy the hopes of a good man, but that if he returns speedily, he shall be pardoned speedily; for God will do this for him, not by permitting him to sin again, but by taking his sin away, and healing his soul; but how soon, or how much, or how long, God will pardon or forbear, he hath no way told us. For in the several states and periods of the soul in order to virtue or vice respectively, there is no specifical difference but of degrees only, not of state. As the sins are more or longer, God is more angry, and the man further off; but the man is not wholly altered from his state of grace, till he be arrived at the unpardonable condition. He is a good or an evil man, more or less, according as he sins or repents. For neither of the appellatives are absolute and irrespective; and though in philosophy we use to account them such by the prevailing ingredient, yet the measures of the Spirit are otherwise. The whole affair is arbitrary, and gradual, various by its own measures and the good pleasure of God; so that we cannot in these things, which are in perpetual flux, come to any certain measures. But although in judging of events we are uncertain, yet in the measures of repentance we can be better guided. Therefore, first, in general,

43. II. St. Cyprian's rule is a prudent measure, "Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditèr defleamus; ut pœnitentia crimine minor non sit:—According to the greatness of the sin, so must be the greatness of the sorrow:" and therefore we are, in our beginnings and progressions of repentance, to consider, 1. all the circumstances of aggravation; 2. the complication of the crime; 3. the scandal; and, 4. evil effect; and in proportion to every one of these, the sorrow is to be enlarged and continued. For if it be necessary to be afflicted because we have done evil; it is also necessary, that our affliction and grief be answerable to all the parts of evil: because a sin grows greater by being more in matter or choice, in the instances, or in the adhesion; and as two sins must be deplored more than one, so must two degrees, that is, the greater portions of malice and wilfulness be mourned for with a bigger sorrow than the less.

44. III. Every single act of sin must be cut off by a moral revocation, or a contrary act; by which I mean, an

express hatred and detestation of it. For an act of sin being in its proportion an aversion or turning from God, and repentance being in its whole nature a conversion to him, that act must be destroyed as it can be. Now because that which is done, cannot naturally be made undone, it must morally; that is, it must be revoked by an act of nolition, and hatred of it, and a wishing it had never been done; for that is properly a conversion from that act of sin.

45. IV. But because, in some cases, a moral revocation may be like an ineffective resolution, therefore, besides the inward nolition or hating of the sin, in all signal and remarked instances of sin, it is highly requisite that the sinning man do oppose an act of virtue to the act of sin in the same instance where it is capable; as, to an act of gluttony, let him oppose an act of abstinence; to an act of uncleanness, an act of purity and chastity; to anger and fierce contentions, let him oppose charity and silence: for to hate sin, and not to love virtue, is a contradiction, and to pretend it is hypocrisy. But besides this, as the nolition or hatred of it does, if it be real, destroy the moral being of that act, so does the contrary act destroy its natural being, as far as it is capable. And however it be, yet it is, upon this account, necessary. For since one act of sin deliberately chosen was an ill beginning and inlet of a habit, it is necessary that there be as much done to obtain the habit of the contrary virtue, as was done towards the habit of vice; that to God as entire a restitution as can, may be made of his own right, and purchased inheritance.

46. V. Every act of sin is a displeasure to God and a provocation of an infinite majesty, and therefore the repentance for it must also have other measures than by the natural and moral proportions. One act of sorrow is a moral revocation of one act of sin, and as much a natural deletion of it as the thing is capable. But there is something more in it than thus, for a single act of sin deserves an eternal hell; and upon what account soever that be, it is fit that we do something of repentance in relation to the offence of an infinite God: and therefore let our repentance proceed towards infinite as much as it may: my meaning is, that we do not finally rest in a moral revocation of an act by an act, but that we beg for pardon all our days, even for that one sin. For

besides that every sin is against an infinite God, and so ought to be washed off with a sorrow as near to infinite as we can; we are not certain in what periods of sorrow God will speak to us in the accents of mercy and voice of pardon: he always takes of them that repent, less than he could in justice exact if he so pleased; but how much less he will take, he hath nowhere told us, and therefore let us make our way as secure as we can; let us still go on in repentance, and in the progression we are sure to meet with God. But there is in it yet more. For however the act of sin be usually called and supposed to be a single act, yet if we consider how many fancies and temptations were preparatory to it, how many consentings to the sin, how many desires and acts of prosecution, what contrivances, and resistances of the holy motions of God's Spirit, and the checks of conscience, how many refusings of God and his laws, what unfitting means and sinful progressions were made to arrive thither, what criminal and indecent circumstances, what degrees of consent, and approaches to a perfect choice, what vicious hopes and vile fears, what expense of time and misemployed passions, were in one act of fornication or murder, oppression of the poor, or subornation of witnesses,—we shall find that the proportions will be too little to oppose but one act of virtue against all these evils; especially since an act of virtue, as we order our affairs, is much more single than an act of vice is.

47. VI. Every single act of vice may and must be repented of particularly, if it be a wilful, deliberate, and observed action. A general repentance will not serve the turn in these cases. When a man hath forgotten the particulars, he must make it up as well as he can. This is the evil of a delayed repentance,—it is a thousand to one but it is imperfect and lame, general and inactive; it will need arts of supply and collateral remedies, and reflex actions of sorrow, and what the effect will be, is in many degrees uncertain: but if it be speedy and particular, the remedy is the more easy, the more ready, and the more certain. But when a man is overtaken in a fault, he must be restored again as to that particular; for by that he transgressed, there he is smitten and wounded; in that instance the habit begins, and at that door the Divine judgment may enter, for his anger is there already. For although God pardons all sins or none, in respect of the

final sentence and eternal pain, yet God strikes particular sins with proper and specific punishments in this life, which if they be not diverted by proper applications, may break us all in pieces. And therefore David's repentance was particularly applied to his special case, of murder and adultery; and because some sins are harder to be pardoned, and harder to be cured than others, it is certain they must be taken off by a special regard. A general repentance is never sufficient but when there cannot be a particular.

48. VII. Whoever hath committed any one act of a great crime, let him take the advantage of his first shame and regret; and in the activity of that passion let him design some fasting-days as the solemnities of his repentance, which he must employ in the bitterness of his soul, in detestation of his sin, in judging, condemning, and executing sentence upon himself; and in all the actions of repentance, which are the parts and fruits of this duty, according as he shall find them described in their proper places.

49. These are the measures of repentance for single acts of deliberate sin, when they have no other appendage, or proper consideration.

But there are some acts of sin, which, by several ways and measures, pass into habits, directly, or by equivalence and moral value. For, 1. The repetition of acts and proceeding in the same crime is a perfect habit, which as it rises higher to obstinacy, to perseverance, to resolutions never to repent, to hardness of heart, to final impenitence, so it is still more killing and damnable. 2. If a man sins often in several instances, it is a habit properly so called; for although the instances be single, yet the disobedience and disaffection are united and habitual. 3. When a single act of sin is done, and the guilt remains, not rescinded by repentance, that act which naturally is but single, yet morally is habitual. Of these I shall give account in the next chapter, where they are of proper consideration. But there are yet three ways more, by which single acts do become habits, by equivalence and moral value,—and are here to be considered accordingly.

50. VIII. First, if a single act of sin have a permanent matter, so long as that matter remains, the sin is uncancelled. Of this nature is theft, which cannot be cut off by a moral

revocation, or an internal act: there must be something done without. For it is a contradiction to say that a man is sorry for his act of stealing, who yet rejoices in the purchase and retains it: every man that repents, is bound to make his sinful act as much as he can to be undone: and the moral revocation or nolition of it, is our intercourse with God only, who takes and accepts that which is the all that can be done to him. But God takes care of our brother also, and therefore will not accept his own share, unless all interested persons be satisfied as much as they ought. There is a great matter in it, that our neighbour also do forgive us, that his interest be served, that he do not desire our punishment: of this I shall afterward give account; in the meantime, if the matter of our sin be not taken away,—so long as it remains, so long there is a remanence and a tarrying in it, and that is a degree of habit.

51. IX. Secondly: if the single act have a continual flux or emanation from itself, it is as a habit by moral account, and is a principle of action, and is potentially many. Of this nature is every action, whose proper and immediate principle is a passion. Such as hatred of our neighbour, a fearfulness of persecution, a love of pleasures. For a man cannot properly be said to have an act of hatred, an actual expression of it he may; but if he hates him in one act, and repents not of it, it is a vicious affection, and, in the sense of moral theology, it is a habit; the law of God having given measures to our affections as well as to actions. In this case, when we have committed one act of uncharitableness, or hatred, it is not enough to oppose against it one act of love; but the principle must be altered, and the love of our neighbour must be introduced into our spirit.

52. X. There is yet another sort of sinful action which does in some sense equal a habit,—and that is an act of the greatest and most crying sins, a complicated sin. Thus, for a prince or a priest to commit adultery, for a child to accuse his father falsely, to oppress a widow in judgment, are sins of a monstrous proportion; they are three or four sins apiece, and therefore are to be repented of by untwining the knot, and cutting asunder every thread: he that repents of adultery, must repent of his uncleanness, and of his injustice or wrong to his neighbour, and of his own breach

of faith, and of his tempting a poor soul to sin and death; and he must make amends for the scandal besides, in case there was any in it. In these, and all the like cases, let no man flatter himself when he hath wept and prayed against his sin; one solemnity is not sufficient; one act of contrition is but the beginning of a repentance; and where the crime is capital by the laws of wise nations, the greatest, the longest, the sharpest repentance, is little enough in the court of conscience. So Pacianus:[m] "Hæc est Novi Testamenti tota conclusio; despectus in multis Spiritus Sanctus hæc nobis capitalis periculi conditione legavit. Reliqua peccata meliorum operum compensatione curantur: hæc verò tria crimina, ut basilisci alicujus afflatus, ut veneni calix, ut lethalis arundo, metuenda sunt: non enim vitiare animam, sed intercipere noverunt." Some sins do pollute, and some do kill, the soul, that is, are very near approaches to death, next to the unpardonable state: and they are to be repented of, just as habits are,[n] even by a long and a laborious repentance, and by the piety and holiness of our whole ensuing life. "De peccato remisso noli esse securus," said the son of Sirach. "Be not secure, though your sin be pardoned;"—when therefore you are working out and suing your pardon, be not too confident.

53. XI. Those acts of sin which can once be done and no more, as parricide, and such which destroy the subject or person against whom the sin is committed, are to be cured by prayer, and sorrow, and intercourses with God immediately: the effect of which, because it can never be told, and because the mischief can never be rescinded so much as by fiction of law, nor any supply be made to the injured person,—the guilty man must never think himself safe, but in the daily and nightly actions of a holy repentance.

54. XII. He that will repent well and truly of his single actual sins, must be infinitely careful that he do not sin after his repentance, and think he may venture upon another single sin, supposing that an act of contrition will take it off; and so interchange his days by sin and sorrow, doing tomorrow what he was ashamed of yesterday. For he that sins upon the confidence of repentance, does not repent at all, because he repents that he may sin: and these single

[m] Parænes. ad Pœnitentiam.

[n] See chap. v.

acts so periodically returning, do unite and become a habit. He that resolves against a sin, and yet falls when he is tempted, is under the power of sin in some proportion, and his estate is very suspicious; though he always resolved against that sin which he always commits. It is upon no other account that a single sin does not destroy a man, but because itself is speedily destroyed; if, therefore, it goes on upon its own strength, and returns in its proper period, it is not destroyed, but lives and endangers the man.

55. XIII. Be careful that you do not commit a single act of sin towards the latter end of your life; for it being uncertain what degrees of anger God will put on, and in what periods of time he will return to mercy, the nearer to our death such sins intervene, the more degrees of danger they have. For although the former discourse is agreeable to the analogy of the Gospel, and the economy of the Divine mercy, yet there are sad words spoken against every single sin. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offends in one instance, he shall be guilty of all," saith St. James;[o] plainly affirming, that the admitting one sin, much more the abiding in any one sin, destroys all our present possession of God's favour. Concerning which, although it may seem strange that one prevarication in one instance should make a universal guilt, yet it will be certain and intelligible if we consider that it relates not to the formality, but to the event of things. He that commits an act of murder, is not therefore an adulterer, but yet, for being a murderer, he shall die. He is as if he were guilty of all; that is, his innocence in the other shall not procure him impunity in this. One crime is inconsistent with God's love and favour.

56. But there is something more in it than this. For every one that breaks a commandment, let the instance be what it will, is a transgressor of the same bond by which he was bound to all. "Non quòd omnia legis præcepta violârit, sed quòd legis autorem contempserit, eoque præmio meritò careat, quod legis cultoribus propositum est," saith Venerable Bede:—"He did not violate all the commandments, but he offended him who is the giver of all the commandments." It is like letting one bead fall from a rosary or coronet of bugles. This, or that, or a third, makes no

[o] James, ii. 10.

difference, the string is as much broken if he lets one to slide, as if he dropped twenty. It was not an ill conceit of Menedemus the Eretrian, that 'there was but one virtue, which had divers names.' Ariston Chius expressed the same conceit with a little difference; affirming 'all virtues to be the same in reality and nature, but to have a certain diversification or rational difference by relation to their objects.' As if one should call the sight when it looks upon a crow, μελανθέαν,—if upon a swan, λευκοθέαν; so is virtue. When it moderates the affections, it is temperance; when it balances contracts, it is justice; when it considers what is, and what is not, to be done, it is prudence. That which they call virtue, if we call it the grace of God, or obedience, it is very true which they say. For the same spirit, the same grace of obedience, is chastity, or temperance, or justice, according as is the subject-matter. The love of God, if it be in us, is productive of all worthiness: and this is it which St. John said; "This is love, that we keep his commandments; the love of God constraineth us; it worketh all the works of God in us; it is the fulfilling of the commandments." For this is a catholicon, a universal grace. Charity gives being to all virtues, it is the life and spirit of all holy actions. Abstinence from feasts and inordination, mingled with charity, is temperance. And justice is charity, and chastity is charity, and humility is still but an instance of charity. This is that transcendent that gives life and virtue to alms, to preaching, to faith, to miracles; it does all obedience to God, all good offices to our neighbours: which, in effect, is nothing but the sentence of Menedemus and Ariston, that 'there is a universal virtue;' that is, 'there is one soul and essence of all virtue:' they call it 'virtue,' St. Paul calls it 'charity;' and this is that one thing which is necessary, that one thing which every man that sins does violate; he that is guilty of all, is but guilty of that one, and therefore, he that is guilty of that one, of the breach of charity, is guilty of all. And upon this account it is, that no one sin can stand with the state of grace; because he that sins in one instance, sins against all goodness: not against all instances of duty, but against that which is the life of all, against charity and obedience.

A Prayer to be said in the days of Repentance for the Commission of any great Crime.

O most glorious God, I tremble to come into thy presence, so polluted and dishonoured as I am by my foul stain of sin which I have contracted, but I must come, or I perish. O my God, I cannot help it now; miserable man that I am, to reduce myself to so sad a state of things, that I neither am worthy to come unto thee, nor dare I stay from thee: miserable man that I am, who lost that portion of innocence, which, if I should pay my life in price, I cannot now recover. O dear God, I have offended thee my gracious Father, my Lord, my Patron, my Judge, my Advocate, and my Redeemer. Shame and sorrow are upon me, for so offending thee, my gracious Saviour. But glory be to thee, O Lord, who art such to me who have offended thee. It aggravates my sin, that I have sinned against thee, who art so excellent in thyself, who art so good to me: but if thou wert not so good to me, though my sin would be less, yet my misery would be greater. The greatness of my crime brings me to my remedy; and now I humbly pray thee to be merciful to my sin, for it is very great.

II.

O my God, pity me, and relieve my sad condition, which is so extremely evil, that I have no comfort but from that which is indeed my misery: my baseness is increased by my hopes; for it is thy grace and thy goodness which I have so provoked. Thou, O God, didst give me thy grace, and assist me by thy Holy Spirit, and call me by thy word, and instruct me by thy wisdom, and didst work in me to will and to do according to thy good pleasure. I knew my sin, and I saw my danger, and I was not ignorant, and I was not surprised: but wilfully, knowingly, basely, and sensually, I gave thee away for the pleasure of a minute, for the purchase of vanity; nay, I exchanged thee for shame and sorrow, and having justly forfeited thy love, am placed I know not where, nor in what degree of thy anger, nor in what neighbourhood of damnation.

III.

O God my God, what have I done? whither am I fallen? I was well and blessed, circled with thy graces, conducted by

thy Spirit, sealed up to the day of redemption, in a hopeful way towards thee; and now I have listened to the whispers of a tempting spirit; and for that which hath in it no good, no reason, no satisfaction; for that which is not, I have forfeited those excellences, for the recovery of which my life is too cheap a price. I am ashamed, O God, I am ashamed. I put my mouth in the dust, and my face in darkness; and hate myself for my sin, which I am sure thou hatest. But give thy servant leave to hope, that I shall feel the gracious effluxes of thy love: I know thou art angry with me, I have deserved it. But if thou hadst not loved me, and pitied me, thou mightest have stricken me in the act of my shame: I know the design of thy mercy and loving-kindness is to bring me to repentance and pardon, to life and grace. I obey thee, O God, I humbly obey thy gracious purposes. Receive, O Lord, a returning sinner, a poor wounded person, smitten by my enemies, broken by my sin, weary and heavy laden; ease me of my burden, and strengthen me by a mighty grace, that hereafter I may watch more carefully, resist more pertinaciously, walk more circumspectly, and serve thee without the interruptions of duty by the intervening of a sin. O let me rather die, than choose to sin against thee any more. Only try me this once, and bear me in thy arms, and fortify my holy purposes, and conduct me with thy grace, that thou mayest delight to pardon me, and to save me through Jesus Christ, my Lord and dearest Saviour. Amen.

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.

CHAPTER V.

OF HABITUAL SINS, AND THEIR MANNER OF ERADICATION OR CURE, AND THEIR PROPER INSTRUMENTS OF PARDON.

SECTION I.

The State of the Question.

Boethius the epicurean being asked, upon occasion of the fame of Strato's comedy, why, it being troublesome to us to

see a man furious, angry, timorous, or sad, we do yet with so great pleasure behold all these passions acted with the highest, nearest, and most natural significations,—in answer to the question discoursed wittily concerning the powers of art and reason, and how much ourselves can add to our own natures by art and study. Children choose bread efformed in the image of a bird or man, rather than a loaf plucked rudely from the baker's lump; and a golden fish rather than an artless ingot; because reason and art being mingled with it, it entertains more faculties and pleasures on more sides.

Thus we are delighted, when upon a table we see Cleopatra dying with her aspicks, or Lucretia piercing her chaste breast. We give great prices for a picture of St. Sebastian shot through with a shower of arrows, or St. Lawrence roasting upon his gridiron, when the things themselves would have pierced our eyes with horror, and rent our very hearts with pity and compassion; and the country-fellows were so taken with Parmeno imitating the noise of swine, that they preferred it before that of the Arcadian boar, being so deceived with fancy and prejudice, that they thought it more natural than that which indeed was so.

3. For, first, we are naturally pleased with imitation, and have secret desires to transcribe the copy of the creation, and then having weakly imitated the work of God in making some kind of production from our own perfections, such as it is, and such as they are, we are delighted in the imagery, as God is in the contemplation of the world. For we see a nature brought in upon us by art and imitation. But what in natural things we can but weakly imitate, in moral things we can really effect. We can efform our nature over anew, and create ourselves again, and make ourselves bad when God hath made us good; and what was innocent in nature, we make to be vicious by custom and evil habit; or on the contrary, what was crooked in nature, we can make straight by philosophy, and wise notices, and severe customs; and there is nothing in nature so imperfect or vicious, but it can be made useful and regular by reason and custom, and the grace of God; and even our brute parts are obedient to these. Homer observes it of the wise Ulysses,

that though he was troubled to see his wife weep for him, yet

> Ὀφθαλμοὶ δ' ὡσεὶ κέρα ἔστασαν, ἠὲ σίδηρος,
> Ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισι· δόλῳ δ' ὅγε δάκρυα κεῦθεν.[o]

"He held the corners of his eyes as firmly as the horn of his bow, or the iron of his spear, and by his wit he kept his eyes from running over." Reason can make every member of the body obey; but use can make it obey willingly: that can command nature, but this can change it: that can make it do what it pleases, but this can make it be so.

4. For there being in man so much brutishness and inclination to forbidden actions and things, to sensual and weak fruitions, nature in many instances calls upon us to die. Ἔα μ' ἀπολέσθαι· τοῦτο γάρ μοι συμφέρει·—"Let me perish, for it is for my advantage:" I desire to die because it is pleasant.

> Γνώμην ἔχοντά μ' ἡ φύσις βιαζεται.

'Nature does seem to do violence to us, and constrain us by violent inclinations to things against reason:' but then when passion supervenes, and, like strong winds, blow vehemently and raise a storm, we should certainly perish, if God did not give us other principles which might be as effective of his purposes, as nature and passion are of death and folly. Passion can be commanded by reason, but nothing hath sufficient and final effort and strength against nature, but custom.

> Ναῦς ὥς τις ἐκ μὲν γῆς ἀνήρτηται βρόχοις,
> Πνεῖ δ' οὖρος, ἡμῖν δ' εὖ κρατεῖ τὰ πείσματα.

"For our ship is kept fast and firm in its station by cables, and when the winds blow, we have anchors and fastenings to secure it." Which verses Plutarch expounding, Πείσματα γὰρ λέγει τὰς ἀντεχούσας κρίσεις πρὸς τὸ αἰσχρὸν, εἶτα ὥσπερ ὑπὸ πνεύματος πολλοῦ ῥηγνυμένας τοῦ τάθους, saith that "the cables which are to secure our ship in tempests, are the firm and permanent judgments against that which is filthy."[p] They secure when the winds of passion are violent and dangerous. But then because the storm is renewed every day, and μένουσιν αἱ φύσεις, ὡς προῆλθον τὸ πρότερον, nature will revert, and for ever be longing after its own proportions, we must introduce

[o] Ὀδυσσ. τ. 211.

[p] Xylandri, tom. ii. p. 445.

a nature against a nature: and as passion sets nature on work, and is itself overcome by reason, so if this reason become constant, firm, and habitual, it makes nature an artless, jointless enemy.

5. But then on the other side, if we let our evil appetites prevail, and use them to satisfaction and empire, bringing in evil customs upon our vicious and ill-disposed nature, we are fallen into an evil state of things: for custom and vicious habits are like the locks and bars to hell-gates, a man cannot but do evil, and then his case is intolerable.

6. Now because this is a great state of danger, and consequently a great caution against continuing in sin, I shall put some strength to it, and rescue the whole doctrine concerning this article from the false glosses and imperfect notices of men, which hang upon the duty of repentance like shackles and fetters hindering it to begin betimes, and so to proceed to its measures by the many and just limits and steps of its progression. For the case is this:

If you ask, when every man is bound to repent, I answer, as soon as ever he hath sinned. But how if he does not? then he adds more sin both against God and against his own soul, by delaying this duty, to that he did before in the single action of which he is tied to repent. For every man is bound to repent instantly of every known sin: he sins anew if he does not, though he add no more of the same actions to his heap. But it is much worse if he sins on; not only because he sins oftener, but because if he contracts a custom or habit of sin, he superadds a state of evil to himself, distinct from the guilt of all those single actions which made the habit. This I shall endeavour to prove against the doctrine of the Roman schools, who teach:

7. I. That no man is ordinarily bound to repent instantly of his sin; for the precept of repentance being affirmative, it does not oblige to its present or speedy performance.[q] For it is as in the case of baptism, or prayers; to the time of the performance of which duties, the commandment of God does not specifically bind us, now, or an hour hence, or when it is convenient, or when it becomes accidentally necessary, and determined by something else that intervenes: so it is in repentance: so it be done at all, it matters not

[q] Navarre Compend. Manual. c. i. n. 31.

when, as to the duty of it; when you come to die, or when you justly fear it; as in the days of the plague, or before a battle, or when the holy man comes to take his leave of his dying parishioner, then let him look to it.[q] But else he is not obliged. For the sin that was committed ten years since, grows no worse for abiding; and of that we committed yesterday, we are as deeply guilty as of the early sins of our youth; but no single sin can increase its guilt by the putting off our repentance and amendment.

8. II. The guilt of sin which we have committed, they call habitual sin; that is a remaining obligation to punishment for an action that is past, a guiltiness: or as Johannes de Lugo[r] expresses it, "peccatum actuale moraliter perseverans;—the actual sin morally remaining," by which a man is justly hated by God. But "this habitual sin is not any real quality or habit, but a kind of[s] moral denomination or ground thereof, which remains till it be retracted by repentance." The person is still esteemed[t] 'injurious, and obliged to satisfaction.' That is all.

9. III. The frequent repetition of sinful acts will, in time, naturally produce a habit, a proper, physical, inherent, permanent quality; but this is so natural, that it is no way voluntary but in its cause, that is, in the actions which produced it, and, therefore, it can have in it no blame, no sinfulness, no obliquity, distinct from those actions that caused it, and requires no particular or distinct repentance;[u] for when the single acts of sin are repented of, the remaining habit is innocent, and the facility to sin which remains, is no sin at all.

10. IV. These habits of sin may be pardoned without the contrary habit of virtue, even by a single act of contrition, or attrition with the sacrament. And the event of all is this, it is not necessary that your repentance should be so early, or so holy, as to obtain by the grace of God the habits of virtue, or to root out the habit of sin; and, 2. It is not necessary that it should be at all before the hour of death, unless by accident it be inferred and commanded.

[q] Vide Infidelity Unmasked, p. 604. "It is true, the best divines teach that a sinner is not bound to repent himself instantly of his sin," &c.

[r] De Pœnit. disp. vii. sect. 5. n. 48. Sic etiam Suarez. tom. iv. in 3. part. disp. 9. sect. 4. n. 23.

[s] Granatens. in Materiâ de Peccatis, tract. 8. disp. sect. i.

[t] Infidelity Unmasked, p. 605. [u] Ibid. p. 607.

I do suppose these propositions not only to be false, but extremely dangerous and destructive of the duty of repentance, and all its consequent hopes, and, therefore, I shall oppose against them these conclusions :

1. Every man is bound to repent of his sin as soon as ever he hath committed it.
2. That a sinful habit hath in it proper evils, and a proper guiltiness of its own, besides all that which came directly by the single actions.
3. That sinful habits do require a distinct manner of repentance, and are not pardoned but by the introduction of the contrary.

The consequent of these propositions will be this. Our repentance must not be deferred at all, much less to our death-bed. 2. Our repentance must be so early, and so effective of a change, that it must root out the habits of sin, and introduce the habits of virtue ; and in that degree in which this is done, in the same degree the repentance is perfect, more or less. For there is a latitude in this duty, as there are degrees of perfection.

SECTION II.

1. *Every Man is bound to repent of his Sin as soon as he hath committed it.*

1. That this doctrine is of great usefulness and advantage to the necessity and persuasions of holy life, is a good probable inducement to believe it true ; especially since God is so essential an enemy to sin, since he hath used such rare arts of the Spirit for the extermination of it, since he sent his holy Son to destroy it ; and he is perpetually destroying it, and will at last make that it shall be no more at all, but in the house of cursing, the horrible regions of damnation. But I will use this only as an argument to all pious and prudent persons, to take off all prejudices against the severity of this doctrine. For it is nothing so much against it if we say it is severe, as it makes for it, that we understand it to be necessary. For this doctrine which I am now reproving, although it be the doctrine properly of the Roman schools, yet it is

their and our practice too. We sin with greediness, and repent at leisure.

> Pars magna Italiæ est, si verum admittimus, in quâ
> Nemo togam sumit, nisi mortuus ——— .[x]

'No man puts on his mourning garment till he be dead.' This day we seldom think it fit to repent, but the day appointed for repentance is always *to-morrow*. Against which dangerous folly I offer these considerations.

2. I. If the duty of repentance be indispensably required in the danger of death, and he that does not repent when he is arrested with the probability of so sad a change, is 'felo de se,' uncharitable to himself, and a murderer of his own soul, then so is he in his proportion who puts it off one day: because every day of delay is a day of danger; and the same law of charity obliges him to repent to-day if he sinned yesterday, lest he be dead before to-morrow. The necessity indeed is not so great, and the duty is not so urgent, and the refusal is not so great a sin in health, as in sickness and dangers imminent and visible: but there are degrees of necessity, as there are degrees of danger: and he that considers how many persons die suddenly, and how many more may, and no man knows that he shall not, cannot but confess that because there is danger, there is also an obligation of duty and charity to repent speedily; and that positively or carelessly to put it off, is a new fault, and increases God's enmity against him. He that is well, may die to morrow. He that is very sick, may recover and live many years. If, therefore, a 'periculum ne fiat,' a danger lest repentance be never done, is a sufficient determination of the Divine commandment to do it then, it is certain that it is in every instant determinately necessary; because in every instant there is danger. In all great sicknesses there is not an equal danger; yet in all great sicknesses it is a particular sin not to repent, even by the confession of all sides; it is so, therefore, in all the periods of an uncertain life; a sin, but in differing degrees. And, therefore, this is not an argument of caution only, but of duty. For, therefore, it is of duty, because it is of caution. It could not be a caution unless there was a danger; and if there be a danger, then it is a duty. For he that is very sick must do it. But how if

[x] Juv. iii. 171. Rupert.

he escapes, was he obliged for all that? He was, because he knew not that he should escape. By the same reason is every one obliged, because whether he shall or shall not escape the next minute, he knows not. And certainly it was none of the least reasons of God's concealing the day of our death, that we might ever stand ready. And this is plainly enough taught us by our blessed Saviour, laboriously persuading and commanding us not to defer our repentance, by his parable of the rich man who promised to himself the pleasures of many years: he reproved that folly with a "Stulte, hac nocte;" and it may be any man's case; for,

Nemo tam divos habuit faventes,
Crastinum ut possit sibi polliceri.[y]

But he adds a precept; "Let your loins be girded about, and your light shining, and ye yourselves like men that wait for their Lord." And, "Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."[z] And much more to the same purpose. Nay, that it was the reason why God concealed the time of his coming to us, that we might always expect him, he intimated in the following parable: "This know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Nothing could better have improved this argument, than these words of our blessed Saviour; we must stand 'in procinctu,—ready girded,' ἑτοίμως πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ἔχοντες,—"ready for the service," always watching as uncertain of the time, but in perpetual expectation of the day of our Lord. I think nothing can be said fuller to this purpose. But I add the words of St. Austin;[a] "Verum quidem dicis, quòd Deus pœnitentiæ tuæ indulgentiam promisit; sed huic dilationi tuæ crastinum non promisit:—To him that repents, God hath promised pardon, but to him that defers repentance, he hath not promised the respite of one day." It is certain, therefore, he intended thou shouldest speedily repent; and since he hath by words and deeds declared this to be his purpose, he that obeys not, is in this very delay, properly and specifically, 'a transgressor.'

3. II. I consider, that although the precept of repentance

[y] Senec. Thyest. 619. Schr. 150.
[z] Luke, xii. 35, &c.
[a] In Psalm cxiv.

be affirmative, yet it is also limited, and the time sufficiently declared, even the present and none else. As soon as ever you need it, so soon you are obliged. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." That is, defer not to hear him this day; for every putting it off is a 'hardening your hearts.' For he that speaks to-day, is not pleased if you promise to hear him to-morrow. It was Felix's case to St. Paul, "Go away, I will hear thee some other time." He that calls every day, means every day that we should repent. For although to most men God gives time and leisure, and expects and perseveres to call, yet this is not because he gives them leave to defer it; but because he still forbears to strike, though their sin grows greater. Now I demand, when God calls us to repentance, is it indifferent to him whether we repent to-day or no? Why does he call so earnestly, if he desires it so coldly? Or if he be not indifferent, is he displeased if we repent speedily? This no man thinks. But is he not displeased if we do not? Does not every call, and every expectation, and every message, when it is objected, provoke God's anger, and exasperate him? Does not he in the day of vengeance smite more sorely, by how much with the more patience he hath waited? This cannot be denied. But then it follows, that every delay did grieve him and displease him, and, therefore, it is of itself a provocation distinct from the first sin.

4. III. But further let it be considered: if we repent to day, it is either a duty so to do, or only a counsel of perfection, a work of supererogation. If it be a duty, then to omit it is a sin. If it be a work of supererogation, then he that repents to-day, does not do it in obedience to a commandment: for this is such a work (by the confession of the Roman schools), which if a man omits, he is nevertheless in the state of grace and the Divine favour; as he that does not vow perpetual chastity, or poverty, is nevertheless the servant of God; but he that does not repent to-day of his yesterday's sin, is not God's servant, and, therefore, this cannot be of the nature of counsels, but of precept and duty respectively. But to put it past all question: it is expressly commanded us by our blessed Saviour, "Agree with thine adversary ταχὺ—quickly." For as it is amongst men of merciful dispositions, he that yields quickly, obtains mercy; but he

that stands out as long as he can, must expect the rigour of the law: so it is between God and us; a hasty repentance reconciles graciously, whilst the delay and putting it off provoke his severe anger. And this the Spirit of God was pleased to signify to the angel or bishop of the Church of Ephesus; "Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works: if thou doest not, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχὺ,—I come unto thee quickly, and will remove the candlestick out of its place, unless thou do repent."[b] Christ did not mean to wait long and be satisfied with their repentance, be it when it would be; for he comes quickly, and yet our repentance must prevent his coming. His coming here is not by death or final judgment, but for scrutiny and inquiry: for the event of the delaying their repentance, would have been the removing of their candlestick. So that ἔρχομαι ταχὺ is, 'I come speedily' to exact of thee a speedy repentance, or to punish thee for delaying; for so the antithesis is plain, ἔρχομαι ταχὺ and ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσῃς,—"I come quickly, unless thou dost repent," viz. quickly; εἰ μὴ παραχρῆμα μετάμελος εἰσήλθεν αὐτῷ, κατέγνω τῶν πεπραγμένων (that I may use the words of Libanius), God will condemn our actions, unless we appear before him with a speedy repentance.

5. IV. Add to this, that though God gives time and respite to some, yet to all he does not. God takes away some in their early sins, and gives them no respite, not a month, not a week, not a day; and let any man say, whether this be not a sufficient indication, not only that no man can be secure, but he alone that repents instantly, but that God does intend that every man should presently repent; for he that hath made it damnation to some for not repenting instantly, hath made it damnable to all, and therefore to repent speedily is certainly a duty. The earth does not open and swallow up all rebels in the day of their mutiny; but it did so once, and by that God did sufficiently consign to all ages his displeasure against rebellion. So it is in the deferring repentance. That some have smarted for it eternally, is for ever enough to tell us, that God is displeased with every one that does defer it; and therefore commands us not to defer it. But this consideration is sufficiently heightened upon this account; for there is no sinner dies but he is taken away

[b] Rev. ii. 5.

without one day's respite. For though God did many times forbear him, yet now he does not; and to his last sin, or his last refusal to hear God, either he afforded no time, or no grace of repentance.

6. St. Paul's discourse and treaty of the Corinthians[c] is sufficient to guide us here: he feared that at his coming again God 'would humble him,' that is, afflict him with grief and sorrow to see it, that himself should be forced 'to bewail many,' that is, to excommunicate, or deliver to Satan, 'them that have sinned already, and have not repented.' If they had repented before St. Paul's coming, they should escape that rod; but for deferring it, they were like to smart bitterly. Neither ought it to be supposed, that the not repenting of sins is no otherwise than as the being discovered of theft. The thief dies for his robbery, not for his being discovered; though if he were not discovered, he should have escaped for his theft. So, for their uncleanness, St. Paul would have delivered them over to Satan, not for their not repenting speedily. For the case is wholly differing here. A thief is not bound at all to discover himself to the criminal judge; but every man is bound to repent. If, therefore, his repenting speedily would prevent so great a calamity as his being delivered over to Satan, besides the procuring his eternal pardon, it is clear that to repent speedily was great charity, and great necessity: which was that which is to be proved. Satan should have power over him to afflict him for his sin, if he did not speedily repent; but if he did repent speedily, he should wholly escape: therefore to repent speedily is a duty which God expects of us, and will punish if it be omitted.

—— Hodiè jam vivere serum est.
Ille sapit, quisquis, Postume, vixit heri.[d]

Think it not a hasty commandment that we are called upon to repent to-day. It was too much that yesterday passed by you, it is late enough if you do it to-day.

7. V. Not to repent instantly, is a great loss of our time, and it may, for aught we know, become the loss of all our hopes.

Nunc vivit sibi neuter (heu), bonosque
Soles effugere atque abire sentit;
Qui nobis pereunt, et imputantur:[e]

And this, not only by the danger of sudden death, but for

[c] 1 Cor. xii. 21. [d] Mart. v. 59, 7. [e] Mart. v. 21, 11.

want of the just measures of repentance: because it is a secret which God hath kept to himself only, and he only knows what degrees of repentance himself will admit of; how much the sin provoked him, and by what measures of sorrow and carefulness himself will be appeased. For there is in this a very great difference. To Simon Magus it was almost a desperate case; "if, peradventure, the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven:" it was worse to Esau: "there was no place left for his repentance." It was so with Judas; he was not admitted to pardon; neither can any one tell, whether it was not resolved he should never be pardoned. However it be for the particulars, yet it is certain there is a great difference in the admitting penitents. "On some have compassion, others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."[f] Now since for all our sins we are bound to ask pardon every day, if we do so, who dares say it is too much, that it is more than needs? But if to repent every day be not too much, who can be sure, that if he puts it off one day, it shall be sufficient? To some men, and at some times, God is implacably angry; some men, and at some times, God hath in his fury and sudden anger seized upon, with the apprehensions of death and saddest judgments, and broken them all in pieces; and as there is a reign and kingdom of mercy, so there are sudden irruptions of a fierce justice, of which God hath therefore given us examples, that we may not defer repentance one day. But this mischief goes further. For,

8. VI. So long as we lie in the guilt of one sin unrepented of, though we do not add heaps upon heaps, and multiply instances of the same or equal crimes, yet we are in so unthriving a condition and so evil a state, that all that while we lose all the benefit of any good thing that we can do upon the interest of any principle whatsoever. For so long as we are out of God's favour, under the seizure and arrest of eternal guilt, so long as we are in a state of enmity with God, and all our actions are like the performances of heathens, nothing to eternal life, but mispendings of our powers, and prodigalities of reason and wise discourses; they are not perfective of our being, neither do they set us forward to heaven until our state be changing. Either then we are not

[f] Jude, 22, 23.

by a certain law and commandment bound every day to serve God and please him, or else we are positively and strictly bound instantly to repent of all our sins; because so long as a known sin is unrepented of, we cannot serve God, we cannot do any thing that shall be acceptable to him in Jesus Christ.

9. VII. Every delaying of repentance is one step of progression towards final impenitence; which is not only then esteemed a sin against the Holy Ghost, when a man resolves never to repent, but if by carelessness he neglects, or out of tediousness and an irreligious spirit quite puts off, or for ever passes by, it is unpardonable;—it shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come. Now since final impenitence is the consummation and perfection of all sin, we are to remember that it is nothing but a perseverance of neglecting or refusing to repent. A man is always dying, and that which we call death is but the finishing of death, the last act of it: so is final impenitence, nothing but the same sin told over so many days; it is a persevering carelessness, or resolution, and therefore it cannot be the sin of one day, unless it be by accident; it is a state of sin, begun as soon as ever the sin is acted, and grows in every day of thy negligence or forgetfulness. But if it should happen that a sinner that sinned yesterday should die to-day, his deferring his repentance that one day would be esteemed so, and indeed really be a final impenitence. It follows, therefore, that to put off our repentance one day, differs only accidentally and by chance from the worst of evils; from final impenitence it is the beginning of it, it differs from it, as an infant from a man; it is materially the same sin, and may also have the same formality.

10. VIII. The putting off our repentance from day to day, must needs be a sin distinct from the guilt of the action whereof we are to repent; because the principle of it cannot be innocent, it must needs be distinctly criminal. It is a rebellion against God, or hardness of heart, or the spirit of apostasy, presumption, or despair; or at least such a carelessness, as being in the question of our souls, and in relation to God, is infinitely far from being excusable or innocent.

11. These considerations seem to me of very great

moment, and to conclude the main proposition: and at least they ought to effect this persuasion upon us, that whoever hath committed a sin cannot honestly, nor prudently, nor safely, defer his repentance one hour. He that repents instantly, breaks his habit when it is 'in ovo,—in the shell,' and prevents God's anger, and his own debauchment and disimprovement:

——— Qui parvis obvius ibit,
Is nunquam præceps scelera in graviora feretur.[g]

And let us consider, that if we defer our repentance one hour, we do to our souls worse than to our bodies.

Nam cur,
Quæ lædunt oculum, festinas demere; si quid
Est animum, differs curandi tempus in annum?[h]

If dirt fall into our eyes, we do not say unto the chirurgeon, Stay, sir, and let the grit or little stone abide there till next week, but get it out presently. This similitude, if it proves nothing, yet will serve to upbraid our folly, to instruct and exhort us in the duty of this question. Remember this, that as in God's account ἀφιέναι and κρατεῖν, to 'remit' and to 'retain' a sin are opposite, so it ought to be in ours. Our retaining and keeping of a sin, though but for a day, is contrary to the designs of mercy and holiness, it is against God, and against the interest of our souls.

SECTION III.

A sinful Habit hath in it proper Evils, and a proper Guiltiness of its own, besides all that which came directly by the single Actions.

1. By a sinful habit, I mean the facility and easiness, the delight and custom, of sinning, contracted by the repetition of the acts of the same sin; as a habit of drunkenness, a habit of swearing, and the like; that is, a quality inherent in the soul, whereby we work with pleasure: for that Aristotle[i] calls the infallible and proper indication of habits, τὴν ἐπιγινομένην ἡδονὴν, ἢ λύπην τοῖς ἔργοις: and so long as any man

[g] Nazian. [h] Horat. Ep. i. 2. 39. [i] Ethic. Nicom. lib. ii. c. 3. Wilkinson, p. 56.

sins willingly, readily, frequently, and upon every temptation, or most commonly; so long he is a habitual sinner: when he does his actions of religion with pain, and of his sin with pleasure, he is in the state of death and enmity against God. And as by frequent playing upon an instrument, a man gets a habit of playing, so he does in renewing the actions of the same sin, there is an evil quality produced, which affects and corrupts his soul. But concerning the nature of a vicious habit, this also is to be added.

2. That a vicious habit is not only contracted by the repetition of acts in the same kind, but by frequency of sinning in any variety of instances whatsoever. For there are many vicious persons, who have an ambulatory impiety, and sin in all, or most of their opportunities; but their occasions are not uniform, and therefore their irregularities are irregular, and by chance for the instance, but regular and certain in the prevarication. Vetuleius Pavo would be sure to be drunk at the feasts of Saturn, and take a surfeit in the calends of January; he would be wanton at the Floralia, and bloody in the theatres: he would be prodigal upon his birthday, and on the day of his marriage sacrifice hecatombs to his Pertunda Dea, and he would be sure to observe all the solemnities and festivals of vice in their own particulars and instances, and thought himself a good man enough, because he could not be called a drunkard or a glutton for one act, and by sinning singly, escaped the appellatives of scorn, which are usually fixed upon vain persons that are married to one sin. Naturally to contract the habit of any one sin, is like the entertaining of a concubine, and dwelling upon the folly of one miserable woman. But a wandering habit is like a 'libido vaga,' the vile adulteries of looser persons that drink at every cistern that runs over, and stands open for them. For such persons have a supreme habit, a habit of disobedience, and may, for want of opportunity or abilities, for want of pleasure, or by the influence of an impertinent humour, be kept from acting always in one scene. But so long as they choose all that pleases them, and exterminate no vice, but entertain the instances of many, their malice is habitual, their state is a perfect aversation from God. For this is that which the apostle calls, "the body of sin,"[k] a compagination of many

[k] Rom. vii.

parts and members; just as among the lawyers, a flock, a people, a legion, are called bodies: and 'corpus civitatis,' we find in Livy;[l] 'corpus collegiorum,' in Caius; 'corpus regni,' in Virgil;[m] and so here, this union of several sins is 'the body of sin,' and that is, 'the body of death.' And not only he that feeds perpetually upon raw fruit, puts himself into an ill habit of body; but he also does the same thing, who to-day drinks too much, and to-morrow fills himself with cold fruits, and the next day with condited mushrooms, and by evil orders, and carelessness of diet, and accidental miscarriages, heaps up a multitude of causes, and unites them in the production and causality of his death. This general disorder is indeed longer doing, but it kills as fatally and infallibly as a violent surfeit. And if a man dwells in the kingdom of sin, it is all one whether he be sick in one, or in twenty places; they are all but several rooms of the same infirmatory, and ingredients of the same deadly poison. He that repeats his sin, whether it be in one, or in several instances, strikes himself often to the heart, with the same, or with several daggers.

3. Having thus premised what was necessary for the explication of the nature of vicious habits, we must consider that, of vicious habits, there is a threefold capacity. 1. A natural. 2. A moral. 3. A relative, as it denominates a man in relation to God.

1. *Of the Natural Capacity of sinful Habits.*

4. The natural capacity of sinful habits is a facility, or readiness of the faculty, to do the like actions; and this is naturally consequent to the frequent repetition of sinful acts, not voluntary but in its cause, and therefore not criminal by a distinct obliquity. Οὐχ ὁμοίως δὲ αἱ πράξεις ἑκούσιοί εἰσι, καὶ αἱ ἕξεις· τῶν μὲν γὰρ πράξεων ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους κύριοί ἐσμεν, εἰδότες τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα· τῶν ἕξεων δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς·——ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἦν οὕτως, ἢ μὴ οὕτω χρήσασθαι, διὰ τοῦτο ἑκούσιοι, said Aristotle.[n] Actions are otherwise voluntary than habits. We are masters of our actions all the way, but of habits only in the beginning. But because it was in our choice to do so or otherwise, therefore the habit which is consequent, is called voluntary: not then chosen, because it cannot then

[l] Lib. i. 8. [m] Æneid, xi. 313. [n] Ethic. lib. iii. c. 5. Wilkinson, p. 106.

be hindered; and therefore it is of itself indifferent: an evil indeed, as sickness or crookedness, thirst or famine, and as death itself to them that have repented them of that sin for which they die; but no sin, if we consider it in its mere natural capacity. Nay so, it may become the exercise of virtue, the scene of trouble indeed or danger, of temptation and sorrow, but a field of victory. For there are here two things very considerable.

5. I. That God for the glorification of his mercy can and does turn all evil into some good, so to defeat the devil's power, and to produce honour and magnification to his own goodness.

—— Ταῦτα μέντοι τοὺς Θεοὺς,
Ἄττ' ἂν ὑμεῖς ἐξαμάρτητ', ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τρέπειν.[m]

For so God uses to do; if we sin we shall smart for it, but he turns it into good; and St. Austin applies that promise, that "all things shall work together for good to them that fear God," even to this particular; "Etiam ipsa peccata, nimirum non ex naturâ suâ, sed ex Dei virtute et sapientiâ:—If all things, then sins also, not by their proper efficacy, but by the overruling power and wisdom of God;" like that of Phocylides,

Πόλλ' ἀπατηθῆναι διζήμενον ἔμμεναι ἐσθλόν·

'He that will be a good man, must be often deceived;' that is, buy his wit at a dear rate. And thus some have been cured of pride by the shames of lust, and of lukewarmness by a fall into sin, being awakened by their own noddings, and mending their pace by their fall. And so also the sense of our sad infirmities, introduced by our vicious living and daily prevarications, may become an accidental fortification to our spirits, a new spur by the sense of an infinite necessity and an infinite danger.

Αὖθις ἐς τἀρχαῖον ὑμῖν, εἴ τι κἀξημάρτετε,
Ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τὸ πρᾶγμα τῇ πόλει ξυνοίσεται.[n]

For whoever repents after such sad intervals of sorrow and sin, either must do more than other men, or they do nothing to purpose. For, besides that an ordinary care cannot secure them who have brought tempters home to themselves, a common industry cannot root out vicious customs; a trifling

[m] Aristoph. Nub. 588. Brunck. [n] Aristoph. Nub. 593. Brunck.

mortification cannot crucify and kill what hath so long been growing with us: besides this (for this will not directly go into the account; for this difficulty the sinner must thank himself) he must do more actions of piety to obtain his pardon and to secure it. But because they need much pardon, and an infinite care, and an assiduous watchfulness, or they perish infallibly, therefore all holy penitents are to arise to greater excellences than if they had never sinned.

Major deceptæ fama est et gloria dextræ;
Si non errasset, fecerat illa minus.[o]

'Scævola's hand grew famous for being deceived, and it had been less reputation to have struck his enemy to the heart, than to do such honourable infliction upon it for missing.'— And thus "there is in heaven more joy over one repenting sinner, than over ninety-nine just persons that need it not;" there is a greater deliverance, and a mightier miracle, a bigger grace, and a prodigy of chance; it being, as St. Austin affirms, 'a greater thing that a sinner should be converted, than that being converted he should afterwards be saved;'[p] and this he learned from those words of St. Paul; "But God commended his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."[q] But now the sinner is more busy in his recovery, more fearful of relapse than before his fall; "sicut feræ decipulam erumpentes cautiores factæ," saith Lactantius; "like wild beasts breaking from their toils, they walk more cautiously for ever after." Thus it is impossible that sin should be exalted above grace, or that the devil's malice can be superior to the rare arts of the Divine mercy; for by his conduct, poison itself shall become medicinal, and sin like the Persian apple,

——— Pomis quæ barbara Persis
Miserat, ut fama est, patriis armata venenis;
At nunc, expositi parvo discrimine lethi,
Ambrosios præbent succos oblita nocendi;

transplanted from its native soil to the Athenian gardens, loses its natural venom, and becomes pleasant as the rinds of citrons, and aromatic as the Eastern spices.

6. II. Although sins in the state of penitence can by God's grace procure an accidental advantage, yet that diffi-

[o] Mart. i. 22. 7. [p] Vide St. Chrysost. epist. ad. Theodor. [q] Rom. v. 8, 9.

culty of overcoming and fierceness of contention, which is necessary to them who had contracted evil habits, is not by that difficulty an augmentation of the reward. As he that willingly breaks his legs, is not more commended for creeping with pain, than if he went with pleasure and ease; and the taking away our own possibility, being a destroying the grace of God, a contradiction to the arts of the Divine mercy; whatsoever proper effect that infers, as it is impious in its cause and miserable in the event, so it does nothing of advantage to the virtue, but causes great diminution of it. For it is a high mistake crudely to affirm, that every repugnancy to an act of virtue, and every temptation to a sin, if it be overcome, increases the reward. Indeed, if the temptation be wholly from without, unsought for, prayed against, inferred infallibly, superinduced by God, then the reward is greater, by how much it was the more difficult to obey. Thus for Jephthah to pay his daughter which he had vowed, and for Abraham to slay his son, were greater acts of obedience, because they were in despite of great temptations to the contrary, and there was nothing evil from within that did lessen the choice, or retard the virtue. But when our nature is spoiled, and our strengths diminished, when the grace of God, by which we stood, is despised and cancelled, when we have made it natural for us to sin, then this remaining inclination to sin and unwillingness to obey, is so far from increasing the reward, that it is not only a state of danger, but it is an unwillingness to do good, an abatement of the choice, a state which is still to be mortified, and the strengths to be restored, and the affections made obedient, and the will determined by other objects.

7. But if the unwillingness to obey, even after the beginning of repentance, were, as it is pretended by the Roman doctors, an increase of the merit or reward, then, 1. It were not fit that we should go about to lessen these inclinations to sin, or to exterminate the remains of the old man, because if they go off, the difficulty being removed, the reward must be no more than ordinary.

III. It would also follow from hence, that the less men did delight in God's service, the more pleasing they should be to him: for if the reluctance increases, then the perfect choice would lessen the reward. And then,

IV. A habit of virtue were not so good as single actions with the remains of a habit of vice, upon the same account: and a state of imperfection were better than a state of perfection, and to grow in grace were great imprudence.

V. It were not good to pray against entering into temptation; nay, it were good we did tempt ourselves, so we did not yield; to provoke our enemy, so he did not conquer us; to enter into danger, so we did not sink under it; because these increase the difficulty, and this increases the reward. All which being such strange and horrid consequences, it follows undeniably, that the remanent portion of a vicious habit after the man's conversion is not the occasion of a greater reward, is not good formally, is not good materially, but is a 'fomes,' a nest of concupiscence, a bed of vipers, and the spawn of toads.

8. Now although this is not a sin, if it be considered in its natural capacity, as it is the physical, unavoidable consequent of actions (for an inherent quality may be considered without its appendant evil), that is, though a philosopher may think and discourse of it as of a natural production, and so without sin, yet it does not follow from hence, that such a habit, or inherent quality, is without its proper sin, or that its nature is innocent. But this is nothing else but to say, that a natural philosopher does not consider things in their moral capacity. But just thus every sin is innocent, and an act of adultery, or the begetting a child in fornication is good: a natural philosopher looks on it as a natural action, applying proper actives to their proportioned passives, and operating regularly, and by the way of nature. Thus we say God concurs to every sin, that is, to the action in its natural capacity, but that is therefore innocent so far; that is, if you consider it without any relation to manners and laws, it is not unlawful. But then if you consider the whole action in its entire constitution, it is a sin. And so is a sinful habit, it is vicious and criminal in its whole nature; and when the question is, whether any thing be, in its own capacity distinctly, good or bad; the answer must not be made by separating the thing from all considerations of good and bad. However, it will suffice, that a habit of vice, in its natural capacity, is no otherwise innocent than an act of adultery or drunkenness.

2. *Of the Moral Capacity of sinful Habits.*

But then if we consider sinful habits in their moral capacity, we shall find them to be a 'Lerna malorum,' and we shall open Pandora's box, a swarm of evils will issue thence. In the enumerating of which, I shall make a great progress to the demonstration of the main question.

9. I. A vicious habit adds many degrees of aversation from God, by inclining us to that which God hates. It makes us to love and to delight in sin, and easily to choose it; now by how much the more we approach to sin, by so much we are the further removed from God. And therefore this habitual iniquity the prophet [r] describing, calls it, 'magnitudinem iniquitatis,'—and the punishment designed for it is called, 'thy lot, the portion of thy measures;' that is, 'plenitudo pœnæ ad plenitudinem peccatorum,' a great judgment to a habitual sin, a final judgment, an exterminating angel, when the sin is confirmed, and of a perfect habit.

10. For till habits supervene, we are of a middle constitution, like the city that Sophocles speaks of;

Πόλις δ' ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει,
Ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στιναγμάτων [s]

It is full of joy and sorrow; it sings and weeps together; it triumphs in mourning, and with tears wets the festival-chariot. We are divided between good and evil; and all our good or bad is but a disposition towards either: but then the sin is arrived to its state and manhood, when the joints are grown stiff and firm by the consolidation of a habit. So Plutarch defines a habit: Ἡ δὲ ἕξις ἰσχὺς καὶ κατασκευὴ τῆς περὶ τὸ ἄλογον δυνάμεως ἐξ ἔθους γιγνομένη.—"A habit is a strength and confirmation to the brute and unreasonable part of man gotten by custom." Οὐκ εὐθὺς γὰρ τὰ ἄλογα πάθη μετρεῖται, καὶ ῥυθμίζεται, καὶ ὑποτάττεται τῷ λόγῳ·—"The brutish passions in a man are not quickly mastered and reduced to reason." Τὰ δὲ ἤθη καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα τλάσσει καὶ κηροχυτεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, φυσίωσιν ἐμποιοῦντα διὰ τῆς συνέχοῦς ἐνεργείας·—"Custom and studies efform the soul like wax, and by assuefaction introduce a nature." To this purpose Aristotle quotes the verses of Evenus.

Φημὶ πολυχρόνιον μελέτην εἶμεναι, φίλε, καὶ δὴ
Ταύτην ἀνθρώποισι τελευτῶσαν φύσιν εἶναι· [t]

[r] Jer. xiii. 22, 25. [s] Œd. Tyr. iii. Kuinoel. [t] Stobæus de Rep. serm. xli.

For as experience is to novices, and tutors to children, so is custom to the manners of men; a fixing good or evil upon the spirit: that as it was said of Alexander, when he was a man he could not easily want the vices of his tutor Leonidas, which he sucked into his manners and was accustomed to in his youth; so we cannot without trouble do against our habit and common usages; 'Usus magister,—Use is the greatest teacher:' and the words in Jeremy,[u] "Ye which are accustomed to do evil;" are commonly read, "Ye which are taught to do evil;" and what we are so taught to do, we believe infinitely, and find it very hard to entertain principles of persuasion against those of our breeding and education.[x] For what the mind of man is accustomed to, and thoroughly acquainted with, it is highly reconciled to it; the strangeness is removed, the objections are considered or neglected, and the compliance and entertainment are set very forward towards pleasures and union. This habit, therefore, when it is instanced in a vice, is the perfecting and improving of our enmity against God, for it strengthens the lust, as a good habit confirms reason and the grace of God.

11. II. This mischief ought to be further expressed, for it is bigger than is yet signified. Not only an aptness, but a necessity, is introduced by custom; because by a habit sin seizes upon the will and all the affections: and the very principles of motion towards virtue are almost broken in pieces. It is therefore called by the apostle, "the law of sin."—"Lex enim peccati est violentia consuetudinis, quâ trahitur et tenetur animus etiam invitus:—The violence of custom is the law of sin, by which such a man is overruled against his will."

Nam si discedas, laqueo tenet ambitiosi
Consuetudo mali——et in ægro corde senescit.[y]

You cannot leave it if you would. St. Austin[z] represents himself as a sad instance of this particular. "I was afraid lest God should hear me, when I prayed against my lust:

[u] Jer. xiii. 23.

[x] Δεινὴ πίφυκεν ἡ συνήθεια κόρον ἀπογεννῆσαι, καὶ φύσιν ἐκ παραλλήλου μεταποιῆσαι, Theoctist. apud Stobæum.—Quantum consuetudo poterit intelliges, si videris feras quoque convictu nostro mansuescere: nullique immani bestiæ vim suam permanere, si hominis contubernium diu passa est.—*Senec. de Irâ*, lib. iii. c. 8.

[y] Juv. vii. 50. Rupert. [z] Lib. viii. Confess. c. 7. et. 5.

As I feared death, so dreadful it was to me to change my custom. Velle meum tenebat inimicus, inde mihi catenam fecerat, et constrinxerat me. Quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido, et dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo; et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas:" 'The devil had made a chain for him, and bound his will in fetters of darkness. His perverse will made his lust grow high, and while he served his lust, he superinduced a custom upon himself, and that in time brought upon him a necessity.' For as an old disease hath not only afflicted the part of its proper residence, and by its abode made continual diminution of his strength, but made a path also and a channel for the humours to run thither, which by continual defluxion have digged an open passage, and prevailed beyond all the natural powers of resistance: so is a habitual vice; it hath debauched the understanding, and made it to believe foolish things; it hath abused the will, and made it like a diseased appetite, in love with filthy things; it is like an evil stomach, that makes a man eat unwholesome meat against his reason:

Αἶ, αἶ, τόδ' ἦδη θεῖον ἀνθρώποις κακὸν,
Ὅταν τις εἰδῇ τἀγαθὸν, χρῆται δὲ μή.[a]

'That is a sad calamity, when a man sees what is good and yet cannot follow it,' nay, that he should desire it, and yet cannot lay hold upon it; for his faculties are bound in fetters; the habit hath taken away all those strengths of reason and religion by which it was hindered, and all the objections by which it was disturbed, and all that tenderness by which it was uneasy; and now the sin is chosen, and believed and loved: it is pleasant and easy, usual and necessary, and by these steps of progression enters within the iron gates of death, sealed up by fate and a sad decree.

12. And therefore Simplicius upon Epictetus, speaking of Medea seeing and approving good things by her understanding, but yet without power to do them, says, Χρὴ οὐ μὴ δοξάζειν μόνον ὀρθῶς καὶ ὀρέγεσθαι, καὶ ἐκκλίνειν ἐπὶ πολλὰ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἔργα σύμφωνα ταῖς ὀρθαῖς δόξαις ἀποδιδόναι·—"It is to no purpose for us to think and to desire well, unless we add also deeds consonant to those right opinions and fair

[a] Eurip. tom. vii. p. 592. Priestley's edition.

inclinations." But that is the misery of an evil habit; in such as have them, all may be well till you come to action. Their principles good, their discoursings right, their resolutions holy, their purposes strong, their great interest understood, their danger weighed, and the sin hated and declaimed against: for they are ἀρχόμενοι παιδεύεσθαι, they have begun well and are instructed, but because of the ἀκρασία καὶ μαλακία, —'their intemperance and softness of spirit' produced by vile customs, there is, as Plutarch[b] observes, θηριῶδες καὶ ἄλογόν τι,—'a fatal bestiality' in the men, they sin, and can neither will nor choose. They are driven to death, and they see themselves crowned with garlands for the sacrifice, and yet go to their ruin merry as the minstrels, and the temptations that entertain and attend those horrid rites. "Sciebam, ut esse me deceret; facere non quibam miser," said he in the comedy:[c]—'I knew it well enough how I should comport myself, but I was so wretched that I could not do it.'

13. Now all this being the effect of a vicious habit, and not of sinful actions, it being the product and sad consequent of a quality introduced first by actions, so much evil cannot be caused and produced immediately by that which is innocent. As the fruit is, such is the tree. But let us try further.

14. III. A vicious habit makes our recovery infinitely difficult, our virtues troublesome, our restitution uncertain. In the beginnings of his return it is most visible. For even after we are entering into pardon and the favour of God, we are forced to fight for life, we cannot delight in God's service, or feel Christ's yoke so easy as of itself it is. For a vicious habit is a new concupiscence, and superinduces such contradictions to the supernatural contentions and designs of grace, it calls back nature from its remedy and purifications of baptism, and makes such new aptnesses, that the punishment remains even after the beginning of the sin's pardon: and that which is a natural punishment of the sinful actions, is, or may be, morally a sin, as the lust which is produced by gluttony. And when a man hath entertained a holy sorrow for his sins, and made holy vows of obedience and a new life, he must be forced to contend for every act of duty, and

[b] θηριώδεις μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ οἰκτρὸν, εἰδότα τὸ βέλτιον ὑπὸ τοῦ χείρονος, ὑπ' ἀκρασίας καὶ μαλακίας, ἄγεσθαι.—*Plutarch.*

[c] Trinummus. act. iii. sc. 2. 31. Schmieder. p. 816.

he is daily tempted, and the temptation is strong, and his progression is slow; he marches upon sharp-pointed stones, where he was not used to go, and where he hath no pleasure.

He is forced to do his duty, as he takes physic, where reason and the grace of God make him consent against his inclination, and to be willing against his will. He is brought to that state of sorrow, that either he shall perish for ever, or he must do more for heaven than is needful to be done by a good man, whose body is chaste, and his spirit serene, whose will is obedient, and his understanding well informed, whose temptations are ineffective, and his strengths great, who loves God, and is reconciled to duty, who delights in religion, and is at rest when he is doing God service. But a habitual sinner, even when he begins to return, and in some measure loves God, hath yet too great fondnesses for his enemy, his repentances are imperfect, his hatred and his love mixed, nothing is pure, nothing is whole, nothing is easy: so that the bands of holiness are like a yoke shaken upon the neck, they fret the labouring ox, and make his work turn to a disease; and (as Isaac) he marches up the hill with the wood upon his shoulders, and yet, for aught he knows, himself may become the sacrifice. St. Austin complains that it was his own case. He was so accustomed to the apertures and free emissions of his lust, so pleased with the entertainments, so frequent in the employment, so satisfied in his mind, so hardened in his spirit, so ready in his choice, so peremptory in his foul determinations, that when he began to consider that death stood at the end of that life, he was amazed to see himself, as he thought, without remedy; and was not to be recovered, but by a long time, and a mighty grace, the perpetual, the daily, the nightly prayers, and violent importunities of his mother, the admirable precepts and wise deportments of St. Ambrose, the efficacy of truth, the horrible fears of damnation hourly beating upon his spirit with the wings of horror and affrightment; and after all, with a mighty uneasiness and a discomposed spirit, he was by the good hand of God dragged from his fatal ruin.

Ἀπάτα δ' ἀπάταις
Ἑτέραις ἑτέρα παραβαλλομένα
Πόνον, οὐ χάριν, ἀντιδίδωσιν ἴχνη.[d]

[d] Sophocles, Œdip. Col. 234. Musgr.

Thus one folly added to another hath great labour and vexation, unquietness and difficulty, for its reward. But as when our blessed Saviour dispossessed the little demoniac in the Gospel, when the devil went forth, he roared and foamed, he rent him with horrid spasms and convulsions, and left him half dead; so is every man that recovers from a vicious habit, he suffers violence like a bird shut up in a cage, or a sick person not to be restored but by caustics and scarifications, and all the torments of art, from the dangers of his nature.

15. IV. A vicious habit makes a great sin to be swallowed up as easily as a little one.

——————————— qui
Radat inaurati femur Herculis, et faciam ipsam
Neptuni; qui bracteolam de Castore ducat.
An dubitet, solitus totum conflare Tonantem?[e]

He that is used to it, makes nothing of sacrilege, who before started at the defrauding his neighbour of an uncertain right: but when he hath digested the first ἰῶτα, by step and step he ventures so far till he dares to steal the thunderbolts from Jupiter; when sin is grown up to its height and station by all its firmest measures, a great sin is not felt; and let the sin be what it will, many of the instances pass so easily, that they are not observed: as the hands and feet sometimes obey the fancy, without the notice of the superior faculties; and as we say some parts of our prayers which we are used to, though we attend not; and as musicians strike many single strokes upon which they do not at all consider; which indeed is the perfection of a habit. So we see many men swear when they know not that they do so, they lie and know they lie, and yet believe themselves: they are drunk often, and at last believe it innocent, and themselves the wiser, and the action necessary, and the excess not intemperance. "Peccata, quamvis magna et horrenda, cùm in consuetudinem venerint, aut parva aut nulla esse creduntur, usque adeò ut non solùm non occultanda, verùm etiam jam prædicanda, ac diffamanda videantur," said St. Austin.[f] At first we are ashamed of sin; but custom makes us bold and confident, apt to proclaim, not to conceal our shame. For though at first it seemed great, yet every day of use makes it less, and at last, all is well, it is a very nothing.

[e] Juv. xiii. 150. Rupert.

[f] Enchirid. c. viii.

16. This is a sad state of sin, but directly the case of a vicious habit, and of use in the illustration of this question. For if we look upon the actions, and little or great instances of folly, and consider that they consider not, every such oath will pass for an indeliberate folly, and an issue of infirmity. But then if we remember that it is voluntary in its principle, that this easiness of sinning comes from an intolerable cause, from a custom of profaneness and impiety, that it was nourished by a base and a careless spirit, it grew up with a cursed inadvertency, and a caitiff disposition, that it could not be at all but that the man is infinitely distant from God,—it is to be reckoned like the pangs of death, which although they are not always felt, yet they are violent, and extreme, they are fatal in themselves, and full of horror to the standers-by.

17. But from hence; besides that it serves perfectly to reprove the folly of habitual swearing, it also proves the main question, viz. that in a vicious habit there is a venom and a malice beyond the guilt, and besides the sinfulness of the single actions that produce and nourish it, the quality itself is criminal. For unless it can be supposed that to swear frequently can at last bring its excuse with it, and that such a custom is only to be estimated according to the present notice and deliberation by which it is attended to; and that to swear often can be but a little thing, but to swear seldom shall be horrid and inexcusable; it must be certain, that the very habit itself is a state of sin, and enmity against God, besides the guilt of the many single actions: because this customary swearing cannot be accounted so bad as it is by the value and baseness of the single actions, which are scarce considered, very often not known, not noted at all, not attended to; but therefore they have their load by being effects of a cursed habit and custom. Here the habit is worse than the action, and hath an evil of its own.

18. V. A vicious habit hath in it this evil appendage, that in every instant of its abode it keeps us out of God's favour; we are in perpetual danger, and under the eternal arrest of death, even without the actions of sin, without pleasure, or possessing any of its baser interests. It was a horrible foolery which Appianus tells of Lentulus Spinther and Dolabella, that when Cæsar was killed in the senate, they drew their swords and ran about the streets, as if they had

done the fact, supposing it to be great and glorious: "quibus gloriâ quidem frui non contigit, sed pœnas dederunt easdem cum sontibus;—they lost their hopes of fame, but yet they were punished for the fact." So useless and yet so pernicious a thing is a vicious habit; a man may pay the price of his lust when he thinks not of it, and perish for all that he was willing to enjoy, though he did not what he would. This is that by which divines use to reconcile the justice of God with the infliction of eternal pains upon temporal and transitory actions. There is in unrepenting or habitual sinners an eternal spring or principle of evil, and they were ready for ever to have sinned; and for this preparation of mind to have sinned for ever, it is by them affirmed to be just to punish them for ever. Now this is not true in the single actions and interruptions of grace by sin, but in the habitual sinner it is more reasonable. Such are they of whom the apostle speaks; "They were past feeling, and yet were given up unto uncleanness;" τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ,—which properly signifies the beginnings or little images of lust; which as they are first in the introduction of lust, so in such persons, they are the only remains of the old man. He cannot sin as he used to do, not by his action, but he sins by his habit.

19. The sum is this. If to love God, to delight in him, to frequent holy offices, to love his service, to dwell in God, to have our conversation in heaven, to lay up our treasure, and our hopes, and our heart there, to have no thoughts, no designs, no employment, but for God and for religion, be more acceptable to God than to do single actions of a prosperous piety upon so many sudden resolutions, and the stock of an alternate and returning duty: then by the same reason it is infinitely more displeasing to God to be a servant under God's enemy and our own, to be in slavery to sin, subordinate to passion, ruled by chance and company, to be weary of well-doing, to delight in sin according to the inner man, this I say, must be an infinite aberration and aversion from God, a contradiction to all our hopes, and that in theology signifies the same effect, as a vicious habit does in nature. For they are the same thing, and have only different conceptions and formal notices; as the patience of Job differs from the patience of St. Lawrence, as natural virtue, from the same grace in a Christian; so does a natural habit of vice in its moral

capacity differ from our aversion from God; I mean in the active sense, which if it be not a distinct state of sinfulness, distinct from the guilt of sinful actions, yet it is atleast a further degree of the same guiltiness and being criminal; and either of them both does sufficiently evince the main question. As the charity and devotion of Cornelius were increased by passing into a habit of these graces; and as the piety of him a Jewish proselyte the habitual piety was mended by his being a Christian, so the single actions of vice pass a great guilt; but there is more contracted by the habitual vileness, and that habit is made worse by being an opposition to, and an alienation from, God. But of this I am now to give more special account.

3. *Of the Relative Capacity of sinful Habits, in reference to God.*

20. I. This is it that contains the strictness of the main question: for a sinful habit is a state of ungraciousness with God, and sin is possessed of our love and choice. Therefore in vain it is to think a habit innocent, because it is a natural product of many single actions. Every proper action of the will is a natural production of the will; but it is nevertheless voluntary. When the understanding hath practically determined the will, it is natural for the will to choose; but yet such a choice is imputable to the will, and if it be not good, is reckoned as a sin. So it is in vicious habits: they are natural effects of many single actions; but then it is also to be remembered that their seat is the will, and whatsoever is naturally there, is voluntary still. A habit of sinning cannot remain at all, but by consent and by delight, by love and adhesion. The habit is radicated nowhere but in the will, except it be by subordination, and in the way of ministries. It follows therefore, that every vicious habit is the prolongation of a sin, a continuing to love that, which to love but once is death. For every one that hath a vicious habit, chooses his sin cheerfully, acts it frequently, is ready to do it in every opportunity, and at the call of every temptation; and according as these things are in every one, so is the degree of his habit. Now since every one of these which are the constituent parts of a habit, implies a readiness and apt choice of the will to sin, it follows evidently, that the capacity of a vicious habit by which it relates to God, consisting of so much evil, and all of it

voluntary upon the stock of its own nature and constitution, is highly, and chiefly, and distinctly, sinful. Although the natural facility is naturally and unavoidably consequent to frequent sinful actions, yet it is also voluntary: for the habit is not contracted, nor can it remain but by our being willing to sin, and delighting in the ways of error.

21. II. Now if we look into the fountains of Scripture, which are admirable in the description of virtue and vice, we shall find, that habitual sin is all that evil which is to be avoided by all men, that have in them the hopes of life. It is the prevailing of sin, it is that by which sins come to their height, it is the debauching of the will and understanding; it is all that which can be signified by those great expressions, by which Holy Scripture describes those great evils which God hates. It is ῥίζα πικρίας,—"a root of bitterness,"[g] such as was in Esau when he undid himself and repented too late: 'an evil heart in turning from the living Lord:' 'a seared conscience:' 'a walking according to the prince of this world:'[h] 'enemies of the cross of Christ:' ἀκαταπαύστους τῆς ἁμαρτίας,—'such as cannot cease from sin:' 'enemies that will not have Christ,' but the devil 'to reign over them;' for this is the true state and constitution of vicious habits. This is more than an ἐμπόδιον, or 'hinderance' of doing our duty; it is a direct ἀκαταστασία καὶ ἀταξία, 'disorder' and corruption inherent in all our faculties.

22. This is signally described by St. Paul, who calls it 'a concupiscence wrought by sin:' "for sin (saith he)[i] wrought in me all manner of concupiscence:" it is called by him, "a law in the members fighting against the law in my mind;" and the man he calls "carnal, sold under sin, dead, killed;" and the sin itself, "inhabitans peccatum,—sin dwelling in me," and "flesh in which dwelleth no good:" φρόνημα σαρκὸς,—"the carnal mind." These things (as is evident) cannot be spoken of the single actions of sin, but of 'the law, the power, the dominion, the reign, the habit, of sin.' It is that which was wrought by sin, viz. by the single actions of sin; and, therefore, he does not mean single actions, neither can he mean the remanent guilt of the past action; but he speaks of a direct state of sinfulness, which is prolifical and productive of sin. For 'sin wrought this concupiscence and

[g] Heb. x. [h] Ephes. ii. 2. [i] Rom. vii. 8, 11, 14.

carnal-mindedness;' and this carnal-mindedness is such a propensity and desire to sin, and hath in it such easiness to act, that it bringeth forth many sins, and they 'bring forth death;' and, therefore, the apostle says expressly, φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος καὶ ἔχθρα εἰς Θεὸν,—"this carnal-mindedness is death and enmity against God;" this is that state in which whosoever abides, cannot please God. To the same purpose are those other expressions of Scripture, calling this state, "vias Balaam,—the ways of Balaam" the son of Bosor, 'a walking perversely with God,' 'a being sold under sin;' and καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίαις,—'hearts exercised or employed and used to covetousness;'[1] and it follows κατάρας τέκνα, —'sons of cursing;' the fault, or charge is more than that of single actions, and the curse is greater than ordinary; as the sin is, so is the curse; the one is apportioned to the other, and appropriate.

23. III. But I consider further. A single act of sin does not in all cases denominate a man vicious. A man is not called a drunkard for having been once drunk, but for being often, for repeating the act, or continuing the affection. Every single act provokes God to anger, but that anger can be as soon rescinded as the act is past, if it remains not by something that is habitual. Indeed he is called a thief or an adulterer, that does one action of those crimes; because his consent in such things is great enough to equal a habit in lesser things. The effect is notorious, the prohibition severe, the dangers infinite, the reasons of them evident; they are "peccata vastantia conscientiam, et quæ uno actu perimunt," as St. Austin says; 'they kill with one blow;' and, therefore, God exacts them highly, and men call the criminal by the name of the vice: but the action gives denomination but in some cases, but the habit in all. No man lives without sin; and in the state of regeneration, our infirmities still press upon us, and make our hands shake, and our foot to stumble; and sometimes the enemy makes an inroad, and is presently beaten out again, and though the good man resolves against all, and contends against all,

Pauca tamen suberunt priscæ vestigia fraudis, (*Virg. Ec.* iv. 31.)

there will be something for him to be humbled at, something

[k] Numb. xv. 30. Jude, 11. [l] 2 Pet. ii. 14.

to contest against, to keep him watchful and upon his guard. But if he be "ebrius" or "petulans," if he be a "drunkard," or "wanton," an extortioner or covetous; that is, if he have a habit of any sin whatsoever, then he is not the son of God, but an heir of death and hell. That, therefore, which in all cases denominates a man such, both before God and before men, when the actions do not,—that must needs have in it a proper malignity of its own; and that is the habit.

24. IV. This we may also see evidently in the matter of smaller sins, and the trifles of our life; which, though they be often repeated, yet if they be kept asunder by the intercision of the actions of repentance, do not discompose our state of grace, but if they be habitual, they do; though, it may be, the single instances, by some accident being hindered, do not so often return: and this is confessed on all hands. But then the consequent of this is, that the very being habitual is a special irregularity.

25. V. This also appears by the nature and malignity of the greater sins. A vicious habit is a principle of evil naturally and directly. And therefore as the capital sins are worse than others, because they are an impure root, and apt to produce accursed fruits; as covetousness is the root of all evil, and pride, and envy, and idolatry: so is every habit the mother of evil, not accidentally, and by chance, but by its proper efficacy, and natural germination, and therefore is worse than single actions.

26. VI. If natural concupiscence hath in it the nature of sin, and needs a laver of regeneration, and the blood of Christ to wash it off, much more shall our habitual and acquired concupiscence. For this is much worse, procured by our own act, introduced by our consent, brought upon us by the wrath of God which we have deserved; springing from the baseness of our own manners, the consequent of our voluntary disobedience. So that if it were unreasonable that our natural concupiscence should be charged upon us as criminal, as being involuntary; yet for the same reason, it is most reasonable that our habitual sins, our superinduced concupiscence, should be imputed to us as criminal, because it is voluntary in its cause which is in us, and is voluntary in the effect, that is, it is delighted in, and seated in the will. But however, this argument ought to prevail upon all that admit the article of original sin, as it is usually taught in schools

and churches. For upon the denial of it, Pelagius also introduced this opinion, against which I am now disputing. And lest concupiscence might be reckoned a sin, he affirmed that no habitude, no disposition, nothing but an act, could be a sin. But on the other side, lest concupiscence should be accounted no sin, St. Austin[n] disputes earnestly, largely affirming and proving, that a sinful habit is a special sinfulness distinct from that of evil actions: "malus thesaurus cordis,—the evil treasure of the heart," out of which proceed all mischief, and a continual defluxion of impurities.

27. VII. And, therefore, as God severely forbids every single action of sin, so with greater caution he provides that we be not guilty of a sinful habit. "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies;"[o] we must not be servants of sin, not sold under sin, that sin have no dominion over us. That is, not only that we do not repeat the actions of sin, but that we be not enslaved to it, under the power of it, of such a lost liberty that we cannot resist the temptation. For he that is so, is guilty before God, although no temptation comes. Such are they whom St. Peter notes, "that cannot cease from sin." And indeed we cannot but confess the reasonableness of this. For all men hate such persons, whose minds are habitually averse from them; who watch for opportunities to do them evil offices, who lose none that are offered, who seek for more; who delight in our displeasure; who oftentimes effect what they maliciously will. Saul was David's enemy, even when he was asleep. For the evil will, and the contradicting mind, and the spiteful heart, are worse than the crooked or injurious hand. And as grace is a principle of good, so is this of evil; and therefore as the one denominates the subject gracious, so the other, sinful; both of them inherent; that given by God, this introduced by our own unworthiness. He that sins in a single act, does an injury to God; but he that does it habitually, he that cannot do otherwise, is his essential enemy. The first is like an offending servant, who deserves to be thrown away; but in a vicious habit there is an antipathy: the man is God's enemy, as a wolf to the lamb, as the hyena to the dog. He that commits a single sin, hath stained his skin, and thrown dirt upon it; but a habitual sinner is an Ethiop,[p] and must be flayed alive before his blackness will disappear.

[n] Lib. de Peccat. Orig. c. vi. et xiii. [o] Rom. vi. 13, 20. [p] Jer. viii. 32.

28. VIII. A man is called just or unjust by reason of his disposition to, and preparation for, an act: and therefore much more for the habit. "Paratum est cor meum, Deus;—O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready:" and St. John had the reward of martyrdom, because he was ready to die for his Lord, though he was not permitted; and St. Austin[q] affirms, that the continence of Abraham was as certainly crowned as the continence of John, it being as acceptable to God to have a chaste spirit as a virgin body, that is, habitual continence being as pleasing as actual. Thus a man may be a persecutor, or a murderer, if he have a heart ready to do it: and if a lustful soul be an adulteress, because the desire is a sin, it follows that the habit is a particular state of sin, distinct from the act, because it is a state of vicious desires. And as a body may be said to be lustful though it be asleep, or eating, without the sense of actual urtications and violence, by reason of its constitution: so may the soul by the reason of its habit, that is, its vicious principle and base effect of sin, be hated by God, and condemned upon that account.

29. So that a habit is not only distinct from its acts in the manner of being, as rhetoric from logic in Zeno, as a fist from a palm, as a bird from the egg, and the flower from the gem: but a habit differs from its acts, as an effect from the cause, as a distinct principle from another, as a pregnant daughter from a teeming mother, as a conclusion from its premises, as a state of aversation from God, from a single act of provocation.

30. IX. If the habit had not an irregularity in it distinct from the sin, then it were not necessary to persevere in holiness by a constant, regular course, but we were to be judged by the number of single actions; and he only who did more bad than good actions, should perish, which was affirmed by the pharisees of old: and then we were to live or die by chance and opportunity, by actions, and not by the will,—by the outward, and not by the inward man; then there could be no such thing necessary as the kingdom of grace, Christ's empire and dominion in the soul; then we can belong to God without belonging to his kingdom; and we might be in God, though the kingdom of God were not in us. For without this we might do many single actions of virtue, and it might

[q] De Bono Conjugat. c. xxi.

happen that these might be more than the single actions of sin, even though the habit and affection, and state of sin remain. Now if the case may be so (as in the particular instance), that the man's final condition shall not be determined by single actions, it must be by habits, and states, and principles of actions: and, therefore, these must have in them a proper good and bad respectively, by which the man shall be judged, distinct from the actions by which he shall not, in the present case, be judged. All which considerations being put together, do unanswerably put us upon this conclusion: that a habit of sin is that state of evil by which we are enemies to God, and slaves of Satan, by which we are strangers from the covenant of grace, and consigned to the portion of devils: and therefore, as a corollary of all, we are bound, under pain of a new sin, to rise up instantly after every fall, to repent speedily for every sin, not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, nor rise upon our lust, nor run his course upon our covetousness or ambition. For not only every period of impenitence is a period of danger, and eternal death may enter; but it is an aggravation of our folly, a continuing to provoke God, a further aberration from the rule, a departure from life; it is a growing in sin, a progression towards final impenitence, to obduration and apostasy; it is a tempting God, and a despising of his grace; it is all the way presumption, and a dwelling in sin by delight and obedience; that is, it is a conjugation of new evils, and new degrees of evil. As pertinacy makes error to be heresy, and impenitence makes little sins unite and become deadly, and perseverance causes good to be crowned, and evil to be unpardonable: so is the habit of viciousness the confirmation of our danger, and solemnities of death the investiture and security of our horrible inheritance.

31. The sum is this. Every single sin is a high calamity; it is a shame and it is a danger; in one instant it makes us liable to God's severe anger. But a vicious habit is a conjugation of many actions, every one of which is highly damnable; and besides that union which is formally an aggravation of the evils, there is superinduced upon the will and all its ministering faculties, a viciousnèss and pravity, which make evil to be beloved and chosen, and God to be hated and despised. A vicious habit hath in it all the physical,

metaphysical, and moral degrees of which it can be capable. For there is not only a not repenting, a not rescinding of the past act by a contrary nolition; but there is a continuance in it, and a repetition of the same cause of death, as if a man should marry death, the same death so many times over: it is an improving of our shame, a taking it upon us, an owning and a securing our destruction, and before a man can arrive thither, he must have broken all the instruments of his restitution in pieces, and for his recovery nothing is left, unless a palladium fall from heaven; the man cannot live again, unless God shall do more for him than he did for Lazarus, when he raised him from the dead.

SECTION IV.

Sinful Habits do require a distinct Manner of Repentance, and have no Promise to be pardoned but by the Introduction of the contrary.

32. This is the most material and practical difficulty of the question: for upon this depends the most mysterious article of repentance, and the interest of dying penitents. For if a habit is not to be pardoned without the extirpation of that which is vicious, and the superinducing its contrary; this being a work of time, requires a particular grace of God, and much industry, caution, watchfulness, frequent prayers, many advices and consultations, constancy, severe application: and is of so great difficulty and such slow progression, that all men who have had experience of this employment, and heartily gone about to cure a vicious habit, know it is not a thing to be done upon our death-bed. That, therefore, which I intend to prove, I express in this proposition.

> A vicious habit is not to be pardoned without the introduction of the contrary, either in kind, or in perfect affection, and in all those instances in which the man hath opportunities to work.

33. The Church of Rome, whose chairs and pulpits are dangerous guides in the article of repentance, affirms that

any sin, or any habit of sin, may be pardoned by any single act of contrition; the continued sin of forty years may be washed off in less than forty minutes, nay, by an act of attrition with the priestly absolution: which proposition, if it be false, does destroy the interest of souls; and it cannot be true, because it destroys the interest of piety, and the necessities of a good life. The reproof of this depends upon many propositions, of which I shall give as plain accounts as the thing will bear.

34. I. Every habit of vice may be expelled by a habit of virtue naturally, as injustice by justice, gluttony by temperance, lust by chastity: but by these it is not meritoriously remitted and forgiven; because nothing in nature can remit sins, or be the immediate natural disposition to pardon. All this is the gift of God, a grace obtained by our holy Redeemer, the price of his blood; but in this, the case is all one as it is in the greatest innocence of the best of men, which, if it be not allowed by incorporation into Christ, and sanctified by faith, wants its proper title to heaven: and so it is with repentance. For nature cannot teach us this lesson, much less make it acceptable. For it depending wholly upon God's graciousness and free forgiveness, can be taught only by him, by whom it is effectual, and this is conveyed to us by our blessed Lord, according to that saying, 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'

35. II. Although a habit cannot be the meritorious cause of pardoning the contrary habit, yet to him that hath contracted a vicious habit, it is necessary, in order to his pardon, that he root out that habit and obtain the contrary in some degrees of prevalence, so that the scales be turned on that side where is the interest of virtue: and this depends upon the evidence of the former proposition. If to be a habitual sinner be more than to be guilty of those actual sins by which the habit was contracted; then as it is necessary to rescind the act of sin by an act of contrition and repentance: so also it is as necessary that the habit be retracted by a habit, that every wound may have its balsam, and every broken bone be bound up and redintegrate.

36. III. But in the case of habitual sins the argument is more pressing. For if the act which is past and remains not, yet must be reversed by its contrary, much rather must that

be taken off which does remain, which actually tempts us, by which we are in a state exactly contrary to the state of grace. For some seldom acts of sin, and in trifling instances, may stand with the state of holiness, and be incident to a good man: but no vicious habit can, neither in a small matter nor in a great; this is an ἀπολλύων,—'a destroyer;' and therefore, as it hath a particular obliquity, so it must have a special repentance, a repentance proper to it, that is, as an act rescinds an act, so must a habit be opposed to a habit, a single act of contrition to a single sin, and therefore, it must be more, no less than a lasting and a habitual contrition to obtain pardon for the habit. And although a habit can meritoriously remit a habit, no more than an act can do an act, they being both equal as to that particular; yet they are also dispositions equally (at least on this hand) necessary for the obtaining pardon of their respective contraries.

37. IV. It is confessed on all sides, that every single sin which we remember, must be repented of by an act of repentance, that must particularly touch that sin; if we distinctly remember it, it must distinctly be revoked by a nolition, a sorrow, and moral revocation of it. Since, therefore, every habit is contracted by many single actions, every one of which, if they were sinful, must some way or other be rescinded by its contrary, the rescission of those will also introduce a contrary habit, and so the question will be evinced upon that account. For if we shall think one act of sorrow can abolish many foul acts of sin, we but deceive ourselves: we must have many for one, as I have already made to appear, a multitude of sighs and prayers against every foul action that we remember: and then the consequent is plain, that upon this reckoning when a habit is contracted, the actions which were its principle, cannot be rescinded but by such repentances which will extinguish not only the formality, but the material and natural effect, of that cursed production, at least in very many degrees.

38. V. A habit opposed to a habit hath greater effect than an act opposed to an act, and therefore is not only equally requisite, but the more proper remedy and instance of repentance. For an act of itself cannot naturally extinguish the guilt, nor meritoriously obtain its pardon: but neither can it destroy its natural being, which was not permanent,

and therefore not to be wrought upon by an after-act. But to oppose a habit to a habit, can equally, in the merits of Christ, be the disposition to a pardon, as an act can for an act; and is certainly much better than any one act can be, because it includes many single acts of the same nature, and it is all them, and their permanent effect and change wrought by them besides. So that it is certainly the better and the surer way. But now the question is not whether it be the better way, but whether it be necessary; and will not the lesser way suffice? To this therefore I answer, that since no man can be acceptable to God as long as sin reigns in his mortal body, and since either sin must reign, or the Spirit of Christ must reign; for a man cannot be a neuter in this war; it is necessary that sin's kingdom be destroyed and broken, and that Christ rule in our hearts; that is, it is necessary that the first and the old habits be taken off, and new ones introduced. For although the moral revocation of a single act may be a sufficient disposition to its pardon, because the act was transient, and unless there be a habit or something of it, nothing remains: yet the moral revocation of a sinful habit cannot be sufficient, because there is impressed upon the soul a viciousness and contrariety to God, which must be taken off, or there can be no reconciliation. For let it be but considered, that a vicious habit is a remanent aversation from God, 'an evil heart,' the 'evil treasure of the heart,' 'a carnal-mindedness,' a union and principle of sins; and then let it be answered, whether a man who is in this state, can be a friend of God, or reconciled to him in his Son, who lives in a state so contrary to his Holy Spirit of grace. The guilt cannot be taken off without destroying its nature, since the nature itself is a viciousness and corruption.

39. VI. Either it is necessary to extirpate and break the habit, or else a man may be pardoned while he is in love with sin. For every vicious habit being radicated in the will, and being a strong love, inclination, and adhesion to sin, unless the natural being of this habit be taken off, the enmity against God remains. For it being a quality permanent and inherent, and its nature being an aptness and easiness, a desire to sin and longing after it, to retract this by a moral retractation, and not by a natural also, is but hypocrisy: for no man can say truly, I hate the sin I have committed,

so long as the love to sin is inherent in his will; and then if God should pardon such a person, it would be to justify a sinner remaining such, which God equally hates as to condemn the innocent: "He will by no means acquit the guilty." It was part of his name which he caused to be proclaimed in the camp of Israel. And if this could be otherwise, a man might be in the state of sin and the state of grace at the same time; which hitherto all theology hath believed to be impossible.

40. VII. This whole question is cleared by a large discourse of St. Paul.[q] For having, under the person of an unregenerate man, complained of the habitual state of prevailing sin, of one who is a slave to sin, sold under sin, captive under the law of sin, that is, under vile inclinations, and high pronenesses and necessities of sinning, so that when he is convinced that he ought not to do it, yet he cannot help it; though he fain would have helped it, yet he cannot obey his own will, but his cursed superinduced necessities; and his sin within him was the ruler, that, and not his own better choice, was the principle of his actions, which is the perfect character of a habitual sinner;—he inquires after a remedy for all this, which remedy he calls a being delivered ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου,—'from the body of this death.'—The remedy is χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ,—'the grace of God' through Jesus Christ; for by Christ alone we can be delivered. But what is to be done? the extermination of this dominion and empire of concupiscence, the breaking the kingdom of sin. That being the evil he complains of, and of which he seeks remedy, that is to be removed. But that we may well understand to what sense, and in what degree, this is to be done; in the next periods he describes the contrary state of deliverance, by the parts and characters of a habit or state of holiness; which he calls, 'a walking after the Spirit,'[r] opposed to a walking after the flesh. 'It was a law in his members; a law of sin' and death. Now he is to be 'made free by' a contrary law, 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus:' that is, as sin before gave him law, so now must the Spirit of God; whereas before he minded the things of the flesh, now he minds the things of the Spirit; that is, the 'carnal-mindedness' is gone, and a 'spiritual-mindedness' is the principle

[q] Rom. vii. 14, 19. [r] Rom. viii. 1, &c.

and ruler of his actions. This is the deliverance from habitual sins, even no other than by habitual graces wrought in us by the Spirit of life, by the grace of our Lord Jesus. And this whole affair is rarely well summed up by the same apostle; "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity: even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."[s] If ye were servants before, so ye must be now; it is but justice and reason, that at least as much be done for God as for the devil; it is not enough morally to revoke what is past, by a wishing it had not been done, but you must oppose a state to a state, a habit to a habit. And the author of the Book of Baruch presses it further yet; "As it was your mind to go astray from God, so being returned, seek him ten times more."[t] It ought not to be less; it must be as St. Chrysostom expresses it, A custom against a custom, a habit opposed to a habit, that the evil may be driven out by the good, as one nail is by another.[u] *Οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς εὐδοκιμοῦντες οἷς ἥμαρτον εὐπρεπεστέραν τὴν ἀπολογίαν εἰσαεὶ φέρονται*, said Procopius;[x] "In those things where you have sinned, to profit, and to increase, and improve to their contraries, that is the more comely way to pardon."

41. VIII. Either a habit of virtue is a necessary disposition to the pardon of a habit of vice, or else the doctrine of mortification of the lusts of the flesh, of all the lusts, of all the members of the old man, is nothing but a counsel, and a caution of prudence, but it contains no essential and indispensable duty. For mortification is a long contention, and a course of difficulty; it is to be done by many arts, and much caution, and a long patience, and a diligent observation, by watchfulness and labour, the work of every day, and the employment of all the prudence, and all the advices of good men, and the whole grace of God. It is like the curing of a hectic fever, which one potion will not do. Origen does excellently describe it: *Ὁ λόγος, ὅτε ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἰσχυροποιηθεὶς καὶ τραφεὶς τῇ μελετῇ καὶ βεβαιωθεὶς τοῖς δόγμασι πρὸς τὸ καλὸν, ἢ ἐγγύς γε τοῦ βεβαιωθῆναι γεγενημένος, ἀνακρούει τοὺς ἐρεθισμοὺς καὶ ὑπεκλύει τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν.*—"When a word is strengthened and nourished by care and assiduity, and confirmed by

[s] Rom. vi. 19.
[t] Baruch, iv. 28.
[u] In Act. iv. hom. 10.
[x] Vandalic. 11.

opinions and wise sentences, or near to confirmation, it masters all oppositions, and breaks in pieces the concupiscence." This is the manner of mortification, there must be resolutions and discourses, assiduity and diligence, auxiliaries from reason, and wise sentences, and advices of the prudent; and all these must operate πρὸς τὴν βεβαίωσιν,—'unto a confirmation,' or near it, and by these the concupiscence can be mastered. But this must be a work of time.

Ἔργόν ἐστι, φανία,
Μακρὰν συνήθειαν βραχεῖ λύσαι χρόνῳ,

said Menander.[y] To dissolve a long custom in a short time, is a work indeed, but very hard, if not impossible, to be done by any man. A man did not suddenly come to the state of evil, from whence he is to arise.[z] 'Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.' But as a man coming into a pestilential air does not suck in death at every motion of his lungs, but by little and little the spirits are poisoned, and at last enter into their portion of death; so it is in a vicious custom. Περόδηλον ὡς αἰεὶ τὰ πονηρὰ τῶν ἐθων ἄρχεται μὲν ἀπὸ μικρῶν· ἀμελούμενα δὲ ἰσχὺν μείζω λαμβάνει.[a] The evil is not felt instantly, it begins from little things, and is the production of time and frequent actions. And, therefore, much less can it be supposed, that we can overcome our filthy habits, and master our fortified corruptions by a sudden dash of piety and the 'ex tempore' gleams of repentance. Concerning this, St. Basil[b] discourses excellently. "Sicut enim morbi corporis inveterati," &c.—"For as the old diseases of the body are not healed without a long and painful attendance; so must old sins be cured by a long patience, a daily prayer, and the sharpest contention of the spirit. That which is died with many dippings, is in grain, and can very hardly be washed out: 'Sic anima, sanie peccatorum suppurata et in habitu constituta malitiæ, vix ac multo negotio elui potest. —So is the soul when it is corrupted with the poison of sin, and hath contracted a malicious habit, it can scarce, but not without much labour, be made clean.'"

42. Now, since we say our nature is inclined to sin, and we feel it to be so in many instances, and yet that it needs time and progression to get a habit of that whither we too

[y] Cleric. p. 270.
[z] S. Basil. homil. ix.
[a] Stob.
[b] In regul. fusiùs disput. q. 6. et 55.

naturally tend; we have reason to apprehend that we need time, and fierce contentions, and the long-suffering of violences, to take the kingdom of heaven by force, by a state of contradiction and hostility against the tempting enemy. It is much harder to get a habit against our nature, and a prepossessing habit, than to confirm nature, and to actuate our inclinations.

43. And this does not only relate to habits in their natural capacity, but in their moral, and consequently their relative capacity, as appertaining to God, in the matter of his valuation of them. Because in habits, as it is in acts, although metaphysically we can distinguish the action from the irregularity, yet because they are subjected in the same person, and the irregularity is inherent in the action, in the whole composition the action is sinful; so it is in habits. For the sin adheres to the natural facility, and follows it in all its capacities. And as the natural facility of doing viciously is cured by time, and a successive continued diligence, so is the sinfulness, because that facility is vicious and sinful. And as heat is distinguished from fire, but you cannot lessen the heat, but by decreasing the natural being of fire; so does the sin of a vicious habit pass away as the habit naturally lessens; that is, the moral capacity changes as does the natural, this being the subject of that, and it could not have been this habit if it had not in it this sinfulness.

44. Now, if the parts of this argument be put together, their intention is this: A habit of sin is not gotten but by time and progression; and yet it cannot be lost so soon as it was gotten; but it is a long time before its natural being is overcome by its contrary. But the sinfulness of it does pass away with the natural being, and no otherwise; therefore the sinfulness of it cannot be removed suddenly. And, therefore, if mortification be a duty, and we be commanded to do it, we are commanded to do a long work and a difficult, a thing that is more than the moral retractation of it by a single act of sorrow or contrition, a duty that contains in it so much work as is proportioned to the necessity, even to the breaking the habit of sin, and setting up the habit of virtue over it. Now, then, all the question will be, whether mortification be a precept or a counsel. Concerning which, I only appeal to the words of St. Paul, Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη

τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,—"Mortify therefore your earthly members;"[c] and, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."[d] Mortification is the condition of life, it is expressly commanded by the apostle that we make 'the deeds of the body to be dead;' that is, the evil habits and concupiscence of the body; for that which St. Paul here calls πράξεις, or 'deeds,' in the same precept written to the Galatians,[e] he calls παθήματα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας,—"lusts and concupiscences." And of what great necessity and effect this mortification and crucifying of our simple customs is, we may understand best by those other words of the same apostle; "He that is dead is justified from sins;"[f] not till then, not till his habit was dead; not as soon as he morally retracts it by an act of displeasure and contrition, but when the sin is dead, when the habit is crucified, when the concupiscence does not reign, but is overcome in all its former prevalences, then he is pardoned, and not before.

45. IX. Unless it be necessary to oppose a habit against a habit, a state of virtue against a state of vice; that is, if a vicious habit may be pardoned upon one act of contrition, then it may so happen that a man shall not be obliged to do good, but only to abstain from evil, to cease from sin, but not to proceed and grow in grace: which is against the perpetual design and analogy of the Gospel, and the nature of evangelical righteousness, which differs from the righteousness of the Law, as doing good from not doing evil. The Law forbade murder, but the Gospel superadds charity. The Law forbade uncleanness, but the Gospel superadds purity and mortification. The Law forbade us to do wrong, but the Gospel commands us to do offices of kindness. Injustice was prohibited by the Law, but revenge also of real injuries is forbidden by the Gospel, and we are commanded to do good to them that injure us; and therefore the writers of the New Testament do frequently join these,[g] 'to be dead unto sin, and to live unto righteousness.' This is that which was opposed to the 'righteousness of the Law,'[h] and is called 'the righteousness of God:' and a mistake in this affair was

[c] Colos. iii. 5. [d] Rom. viii. 13. [e] Gal. v. 24. [f] Rom. vi. 7.
[g] Rom. vi. 18. Ephes. iv. 22. Col. i. 13; iii. 5, 10, 12. Titus, ii. 12–14. Heb. x. 22, 24; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2; iii. 11. 2 Pet. i. 4–8.
[h] Rom. iii. 21; ix. 30, 31. Gal. ii. 16; iii. 8. Phil. iii. 6, 7.

the ruin of the Jews. For 'being ignorant of the righteousness of God, they thought to be justified by their own righteousness which is of the Law:' that is, they thought it enough to leave off to sin, without doing the contrary good, and so hoped for the promises. This was the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, to be no adulterers, no defrauders of the rights of the temple, no publicans or exactors of tribute. But our blessed Saviour assured us that there is no hope of heaven for us, "unless our righteousness exceed this of theirs."

46. Now then, to apply this to the present argument. Suppose a vicious person who hath lived an impious life, placed upon his death-bed, exhorted to repentance, made sensible of his danger, invited by the sermons of his priest to dress his soul with duty and sorrow; if he obeys, and is sorry for his sin; supposing that this sorrow does really begin that part of his duty which consists in not sinning, nay, suppose he will never sin again (which is the righteousness of the Law), yet how can he in that case do that good which is required by the Gospel? "Seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof." The Gospel hath a peculiar righteousness of its own, proper to itself, without which there is no entrance into heaven. But 'the righteousness of the Law' is called 'our own righteousness;' that is, such a righteousness which men by nature know; for we all, by the innate law of nature, know, that we ought to abstain from doing injury to man, from impiety to God: but we only know by revelation the righteousness of the kingdom which consists in holiness and purity, chastity and patience, humility and self-denial. He that rests in the first, and thinks he may be saved by it (as St. Paul's expression is), 'he establisheth his own righteousness,' that is, 'the righteousness of the Law;' and this he does, whosoever thinks that his evil habits are pardoned without doing that good, and acquiring those graces, which constitute the righteousness of the Gospel, that is, faith and holiness, which are the significations, and the vital parts, of the new creature.

47. X. But because this doctrine is highly necessary, and the very soul of Christianity, I consider further, that without the superinducing a contrary state of good to the former state of evil, we cannot return, or go off from that evil condition that God hates, I mean the middle state, or the state of

lukewarmness. For though all the old philosophy consented that virtue and vice had no medium between them, but whatsoever was not evil, was good, and he that did not do evil was a good man, said the old Jews; yet this they therefore did irreprovable teach, because they knew not this secret of the righteousness of God. For in the evangelical justice, between the natural, or legal good or evil, there is a medium or a third, which of itself, and by the accounts of the law was not evil, but in the accounts of the evangelical righteousness is a very great one; that is, lukewarmness, or a cold, tame, indifferent, inactive religion. Not that lukewarmness is by name forbidden by any of the laws of the Gospel, but that it is against the analogy and design of it. A lukewarm person does not do evil, but he is hated by God, because he does not vigorously proceed in godliness. No law condemns him, but the Gospel approves him not, because he does not from the heart obey this form of doctrine, which commands a course, a habit, a state and life of holiness. It is not enough that we abstain from evil, we shall not be crowned unless we be 'partakers of a Divine nature.' For to this St. Peter[1] enjoins us carefully. Now then we 'partake of a Divine nature,' when 'the Spirit dwells in us,' and rules all our faculties, when we are united unto God, when we imitate the Lord Jesus, when we are perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. Now whether this can be done by an act of contrition, needs no further inquiry, but to observe the nature of evangelical righteousness, the hatred God bears to lukewarmness, the perfection he requires of a Christian, the design and great example of our blessed Lord, the glories of that inheritance whither we are designed, and of the obtaining of which, obedience to God in the faith of Jesus Christ is made the only, indispensable, necessary condition.

48. For let it be considered. Suppose a man that is righteous according to the letter of the law of the ten commandments, all of which (two excepted) were negative; this man hath lived innocently and harmlessly all his days, but yet uselessly, unprofitably, in rest and inactive circumstances; is not this person an unprofitable servant? The servant in the parable was just such: he spent not his master's talent with riotous living, like the prodigal, but laid it up in a napkin,

[1] 2 Pet. i. 4.

he did neither good nor harm; but because he did no good, he received none, but was thrown into outer darkness.

> 'Nec furtum feci, nec fugi' si mihi dicat
> Servus, 'habes pretium, loris non ureris,' ajo.
> 'Non hominem occidi;'—'non pasces in cruce corvos.'[k]

An innocent servant amongst the Romans might escape the 'furca,' or the mill, or the wheel: but unless he was useful, he was not made much of. So it is in Christianity. For that which according to Moses was called 'righteousness,' according to Christ is "poverty and nakedness, misery and blindness," as appears in the reproof which the Spirit of God sent to the bishop and Church of Laodicea.[l] He thought himself rich when he was nothing; that is, he was harmless, but not profitable, innocent according to the measures of the law, but not rich in good works. So the pharisees also thought themselves just by the justice of the law, that is, by their abstinence from condemned evils, and therefore they refused to buy of Christ the Lord, gold purified in the fire, whereby they might become rich; that is, they would not accept of the righteousness of God, the justice evangelical, and therefore they were rejected. And thus to this very day do we. Even many that have the fairest reputation for good persons and honest men, reckon their hopes upon their innocence, and legal freedoms, and outward compliances: that they are no liars nor swearers, no drunkards nor gluttons, no extortioners or injurious, no thieves nor murderers; but in the meantime they are unprofitable servants, not 'instructed, not thoroughly prepared to every good work;' not 'abounding in the work of the Lord,' but 'blind, and poor, and naked;' just, but as the pharisees; innocent, but as heathens; in the meantime they are only in that state, to which Christ never made the promises of eternal life and joys hereafter.

49. Now if this be true in one period, it is true in all the periods of our life. If he that hath always lived thus innocently and no more, that is, a heathen and a pharisee, could not by their innocence and proper righteousness obtain heaven, much less shall he who lived viciously and contracted filthy habits, be accepted by all that amends he can make by such single acts of contrition, by which nothing can be effected but that he hates sin and leaves it. For if the most innocent

[k] Hor. i. Ep. 16. 46. [l] Rev. iii. 15.

by the legal righteousness is still but unprofitable, much more is he such who hath prevaricated that and lived vilely, and now in his amendment begins to enter that state, which if it goes no further, is still unprofitable. They were severe words which our blessed Saviour said, "When ye have done all things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants;" that is, when ye have done all things which are commanded (in the law), he says "not all things which *I shall command* you;" for then we are not unprofitable servants in the evangelical sense. For he that obeys this form of doctrine is a good servant. He is "the friend of God."—"If ye do whatsoever I command you, ye are my friends;" and that is more than profitable servants: for "I will not call you servants, but friends," saith our blessed Lord;[n] and for you, 'a crown of righteousness is laid up against the day of recompenses.' These, therefore, cannot be called unprofitable servants, but friends, sons, and heirs; for he "that is an unprofitable servant, shall be cast into outer darkness." To live therefore in innocence only, and according to the righteousness of the law, is to be a servant, but yet unprofitable; and that in effect is to be no heir of the promises; for to these, piety, or evangelical righteousness, is the only title. "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come." For upon this account, the 'works of the law cannot justify us:' for the works of the law at the best were but innocence and ceremonial performances: but we are justified by the works of the Gospel, that is, faith and obedience. For these are the righteousness of God, they are his works, revealed by his Spirit, effected by his grace, promoted by his gifts, encouraged by special promises, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and accepted through Jesus Christ to all the great purposes of glory and immortality.

50. Since, therefore, a constant innocence could not justify us, unless we have the righteousness of God, that is, unless we superadd holiness and purity in the faith of Jesus Christ, much less can it be imagined that he who hath transgressed the righteousness of the law, and broken the negative precepts, and the natural human rectitude, and hath superinduced vices contrary to the righteousness of God, can ever hope to be justified by those little arrests of his sin, and his

[n] John, xv. 14, 15.

beginnings to leave it upon his death-bed, and his sorrow for it, than when he cannot obtain the righteousness of God, or the holiness of the Gospel. It was good counsel that was given by a wise heathen.

> Dimidium facti, qui cœpit, habet; sapere aude;
> Incipe: qui rectè vivendi prorogat horam,
> Rusticus exspectat dum defluat amnis; at ille
> Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.°

'It is good for a man to begin: the clown that stands by a river-side expecting till all the water be run away, may stay long enough before he gets to the other side.' He that will not begin to live well till he hath answered all objections, and hath no lusts to serve, and no more appetites to please, shall never arrive at happiness in the other world. Be wise, and begin betimes.

SECTION V.

Consideration of the Objections against the former Doctrine.

51. I. But why may not all this be done in an instant by the grace of God? Cannot he infuse into us the habits of all the graces evangelical? Faith cannot be obtained by natural means, and if it be procured by supernatural, the Spirit of God is not retarded by the measures of an enemy, and the dull methods of natural opposition. "Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia." Without the Divine grace we cannot work any thing of the righteousness of God; but if he gives us his grace, does not he make us chaste and patient, humble and devout, and all in an instant? For thus the main question seems to be confessed and granted, that a habit is not remitted but by the introduction of the contrary: but when you consider what you handle, it is a cloud and nothing else; for this admission of the necessity of a habit, enjoins no more labour nor care, it requires no more time, it introduces no active fears, and infers no particular caution, and implies the doing of no more than to the remission of a single act of one sin.

52. To this I answer, that the grace of God is a superna-

° Hor. Ep. i. 2. 40.

tural principle, and gives new aptness and inclinations, powers and possibilities, it invites and teaches, it supplies us with arguments, and answers objections, it brings us into artificial necessities, and inclines us sweetly: and this is the 'semen Dei,' spoken of by St. John, 'the seed of God,' thrown into the furrows of our hearts, springing up (unless we choke it) to life eternal. By these assistances we being helped can do our duty, and we can expel the habits of vice, and get the habits of virtue: but as we cannot do God's work without God's grace; so God's grace does not do our work without us. For grace being but the beginnings of a new nature in us, gives nothing but powers and inclinations. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities;"[p] so St. Paul explicates this mystery. And therefore when he had said, "By the grace of God I am what I am;" that is, all is owing to his grace: he also adds, "I have laboured more than they all, yet not I;" that is, not I alone; "sed gratia Dei mecum,—the grace of God that is with me." For the grace of God 'stands at the door and knocks; but we must attend to his voice, and open the door, and then he will enter and sup with us, and we shall be with him.' The grace of God is like a graff put into a stock of another nature; it makes use of the faculties and juice of the stock and natural roots, but converts all into its own nature. But,

53. II. We may as well say there can be a habit born with us, as infused into us. For as a natural habit supposes a frequency of action by him who hath natural abilities; so does an infused habit (if there were any such); it is a result and consequent of a frequent doing the works of the Spirit. So that to say that God, in an instant, infuses into us a habit [of charity, &c.] is to say that he hath in an instant infused into us to have done the acts of that grace frequently. For it is certain by experience, that the frequent doing the actions of any grace, increases the grace, and yet the grace or aids of God's Spirit are as necessary for the growth as for the beginnings of grace. We cannot either will or do without his help; he worketh both in us, that is, we by his help alone are enabled to do things above our nature. But then we are the persons enabled; and therefore we do these works as we do others, not by the same powers, but in the same manner.

[p] Rom. viii. 26.

54. When God raises a cripple from his couch, and gives him strength to move, though the aid be supernatural, yet the motion is after the manner of nature. And it is evident in the matter of faith, which though it be the gift of God, yet it is seated in the understanding, which operates by way of discourse, and not by intuition: the believer understands as a man, not as an angel: and when Christ by miracle restored a blind eye, still that eye did see by reception, or else by emission of species, just so as eyes that did see naturally. So it is in habits. For it is a contradiction to say, that a perfect habit is infused in an instant: for if a habit were infused, it must be infused as a habit is acquired; for else it is not a habit.[q] As if a motion should be infused, it must still be successive as well as if it were natural.

55. But this device of infused habits is a fancy without ground, and without sense, without authority, or any just grounds or confidence, and it hath in it very bad effects. For it destroys all necessity of our care and labour in the ways of godliness, all cautions of a holy life; it is apt to minister pretences and excuses for a perpetually wicked life till the last of our days, making men to trust to a late repentance; it puts men upon vain confidences, and makes them rely for salvation upon dreams and empty notions; it destroys all the duty of man, and cuts off all intercourse of obedience and reward. But it is sufficient that there is no ground for it in Scripture, nor in antiquity, nor in right reason: but it is infinitely destructive of all that wise conduct of souls, by which God would glorify himself by the means of a free obedience; and it is infinitely confuted by all those Scriptures which require our cooperation with the assistances of God's Holy Spirit. For all the helps that the Spirit of grace ministers to us are far from doing our work for us, that it only enables us to do it for ourselves, and makes it reasonable that God should therefore exact it of us, because we have no excuse, and cannot plead disability. To which purpose that discourse of St. Paul is highly convincing and demonstrative; "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,"[r] ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας,—'*according to our desire:*' so it is better read; that is,

[q] Habitus infusi infunduntur per modum acquisitorum.—*Regul. Scholast.*
[r] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

fear not at all, but κατεργάζεσθε,—'throughly do your duty;'[s] for according as you desire and pray, God will be present to you with his grace, to bear you through all your labours and temptations. And, therefore, our conversion, and 'the working our salvation,' are sometimes ascribed to God, sometimes to men;[t] to God as the prime and indeficient cause, to man ὡς συνέργῳ, as to the 'fellow-worker with God;' it is the expression of St. Paul. The Scripture mentions no other effect of God's grace, but such as I have now described. But that grace should do all our work alone, and in an instant, that which costs the saints so much labour, and fierce contentions, so much sorrow and trouble, so many prayers and tears, so much watchfulness and caution, so much fear and trembling, so much patience and long-suffering, so much toleration and contradiction, and all this under the conduct of the Spirit, in the midst of all the greatest helps of grace, and the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit of God; that all this labour and danger should be spared to a vile person, who hath grieved and extinguished God's Holy Spirit, and a way contrived for him that he should enjoy the pleasures of this world, and the glories of the next, is such a device, as, if it had any ground or colourable pretence for it, would, without the miracles of another grace, destroy all piety from the face of the earth. And in earnest, it seems to me a strange thing, that the doctors of the Church of Rome should be so loose and remiss in this article, when they are so fierce in another that takes from such persons all manner of excuse. It is, I say, very strange, that it should be so possible, and yet withal so unnecessary, to keep the commandments.

56. Obj. 2. But if a single act of contrition cannot procure pardon of sins that are habitual, then a wicked man, that returns not till it be too late to root out vicious habits, must despair of salvation. I answer, that such a man should do well to ask his physician, whether it be possible for him to escape that sickness? If his physician say it is, then the man need not despair; for if he return to life and health, it will not be too late for him by the grace of God to recover in his soul. But if his physician say he cannot recover; first let the physician be reproved for making his patient to

[s] Magis operamini. Syrus. Augescite in opere. Arabs.

[t] 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 21. James, iv. 8. Eph. iv. 22–24. Col. iii. 9, 10.

despair. I am sure he hath less reason to say he cannot live, than there is to say, such a person hath no promise that he shall be saved without performing the condition. But the physician, if he be a wise man, will say, so far as he understands by the rules of his art, this man cannot recover; but some secret causes of things there are, or may be, by which the event may be better than the most reasonable predictions of his art. The same answer I desire may be taken in the question of his soul. Concerning which the curate is to preach the rules and measures of God, but not to give a resolution concerning the secret and final sentence. 2. The case of the five foolish virgins, if we may construe it as it is expressed, gives a sad account to such persons: and unless that part of the parable be insignificant, which expresses their sorrow, their diligence, their desire, their begging of oil, their going out to buy oil before the Bridegroom came, but after it was noised that he was coming, and the insufficiency of all this, we may too certainly conclude, that much more than a single act of contrition, and a moral revocation, that is, a sorrow and a nolition of the past sins, may be done upon our death-bed without effect, without a being accepted to pardon and salvation. 3. When things are come to that sad state, let the man hope as much as he can; God forbid that I should be author to him to despair. The purpose of this discourse is, that men in health should not put things to that desperate condition, or make their hopes so little and afflicted, that it may be disputed whether they be alive or no. 4. But this objection is nothing but a temptation and a snare; a device to make me confess that the former arguments (for fear men should despair) ought to be answered, and are not perfectly convincing. I intended them only for institution and instruction, not to confute any person or any thing, but to condemn sin, and to rescue men from danger. But truly, I do think they are rightly concluding (as moral propositions are capable); and if the consequent of them be, that dying persons after a vicious life cannot hope, ordinarily, for pardon, I am truly sorrowful that any man should fall into that sad state of things; as I am really afflicted and sorrowful that any man should live vilely, or perish miserably; but then it ought not to be imputed to this doctrine, that it makes men despair, for the purpose and proper con-

sequent of it is, that men are warned to live so, that they may be secured in their hopes, that is, that men 'give diligence to make their calling and election sure,' that they may take no desperate courses, and fall into no desperate condition. And certainly, if any man preach the necessity of a good life, and of actual obedience, he may as well be charged to drive men to despair; for the sum of the foregoing doctrine is nothing else, but that it is necessary we should walk before God in all holy conversation and godliness. But of this I shall give a large account in the fifth section.

Obj. 3. But if things be thus, it is not good or safe to be a criminal judge, and all the discipline of war will be unlawful and highly displeasing to God. For if any one be taken in an act of a great sin, and as it happens in war, be put to death suddenly, without leisure and space of repentance, by the measures of this doctrine, the man shall perish, and consequently the power by which he falls is uncharitable.

I answer; that in an act of sin the case is otherwise than in a habit, as I have already demonstrated in its proper place: it must be a habit that must extirpate a habit; but an act is rescinded by a less violence and abode of duty: and it is possible for an act of duty to be so heroical, or the repentance of an hour to be so pungent and dolorous, and the fruits of that repentance putting forth by the sudden warmths and fervour of the spirit, be so goodly and fair, as, through the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, to obtain pardon of that single sin, if that be all.

II. But it is to be considered, whether the man be otherwise a vicious person, or was he a good man, but by misfortune and carelessness overtaken in a fault? If he was a good man, his spirit is so accustomed to good, that he is soon brought to an excellent sorrow and to his former state, especially being awakened by the sad arrest of a hasty death: and if he accepts that death willingly, making that which is necessarily enforced upon him, to become voluntary by his acceptation of it, changing the judgment into penance, I make no question that he shall find mercy. But if the man thus taken in a fault was otherwise a vicious person, it is another consideration. It is not safe for him to go to war; but the officers may as charitably and justly put such a person to death for a fault, as send him upon a hard service.

The doing of his duty may as well ruin him, as the doing of a fault; and if he be reprieved a week, he will find difficulty in the doing what he should, and danger enough besides.

III. The discipline of war, if it be only administered where it is necessary, not only in the general rule, but also in the particular instance, cannot be reproved upon this account. Because by the laws of war, sufficiently published, every man is sufficiently warned of his danger; which if he either accept, or be bound to accept, he perishes by his own fault, if he perishes at all. For as by the hazard of his employment he is sufficiently called upon to repent worthily of all his evil life past, so is he by the same hazardous employment, and the known laws of war, cautioned to beware of committing any great sin: and if his own danger will not become his security, then his confidence may be his ruin, and then nothing is to be blamed but himself.

IV. But yet it were highly to be wished, that when such cases do happen, and that it can be permitted in the particular without the dissolution of discipline, such persons should be pitied in order to their eternal interest. But when it cannot, the minister of justice is the minister of God, and dispenses his power by the rules of his justice, at which we cannot quarrel, though he cuts off sinners in their acts of sin, of which he hath given them sufficient warning, and hath a long time expected their amendment: to whom that of Seneca may be applied; "Unum bonum tibi superest, repræsentabimus mortem." Nothing but death will make some men cease to sin; and, therefore, "quo uno modo possunt, desinant mali esse." God puts a period to the increase of their ruin and calamity, by making that wickedness shorter, which, if it could, would have been eternal. When men are incorrigible, they may be cut off in charity as well as justice; and, therefore, as it is always just, so it is sometimes pity, though a sad one, to take a sinner away with his sins upon his head. Ἐπειδὰν οὐχ οἷόν τε ἄλλως καὶ τούτῳ γε οὖν τῷ τρόπῳ ἀπολυθέντες τοῦ ἐνταῦθα δεσμοῦ τῆς κακίας πορίσωνται φυγήν. When it is impossible to have it otherwise, this is the only good that he is capable of,[u] to be sent speedily to a lesser punishment than he should inherit, if he should live

[u] Ingeniis talibus vitæ exitus remedium est: optimumque est abire ei, qui ad se nunquam rediturus est.—*Senec. de Benef.* 7. 10.

longer. But when it can be otherwise, it were very well it were so very often. And therefore the customs of Spain are in this highly to be commended, who to condemned criminals give so much respite till the confessor gives them a 'bene discessit,' and supposes them competently prepared. But if the lawgivers were truly convinced of this doctrine here taught, it is to be hoped, they would more readily practise this charity.

57. Obj. 4. But hath not God promised pardon to him that is contrite? "A contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."[x] And, "I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord: and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin."[y] And the prodigal was pardoned immediately upon his confession and return. "Cœperat dicere, et mox illum pater complectitur," said St. Basil;[z]—"his father embraces him when he began to speak." And St. Chrysostom; "In that moment," says he, "he wipes away all the sins of his life." And St. Austin upon that of David before quoted; "My confession came not so far as my mouth, and God heard the voice of my heart."

58. To this I answer, first concerning the words of David: then concerning the examples. I. Concerning contrition, that it is a good beginning of repentance, is certain, and in its measure acceptable to God, and effective of all its proper purposes. But contrition can have but the reward of contrition, but not of other graces, which are not parts but effects of it. God will not 'despise the broken and contrite heart;' no, for he will receive it graciously, and bind up the wounds of it, and lead it on in the paths of righteousness, and by the waters of comfort.

59. II. But a man is not of a contrite heart as soon as he hath exercised one act of contrition. He that goes to break a rock, does something towards it by every blow, but every blow does not break it. A man's heart is not so easily broken; I mean broken from the love of sin, and its adherence to it. Every act of temperance does not make a man temperate; and so, I fear, will it be judged concerning contrition.

60. III. But suppose the heart be broken, and that the man is contrite, there is more to be done than so. God indeed does not despise this, but he requires more. God did

[x] Psalm li. 17. [y] Psalm xxxii. 6. [z] Homil. de Pœnit.

not despise Ahab's repentance, but it did not do all his work for him. He does not despise patience, nor meekness, nor resignation, nor hope, nor confession, nor any thing that himself commands. But he that commands all, will not be content with one alone; every grace shall have its reward, but it shall not be crowned alone. Faith alone shall not justify, and repentance alone, taken in its specifical, distinctive sense, shall not suffice; but faith, and repentance, and charity, and patience, and the whole circle and rosary of graces and duties, must adorn our heads.

61. IV. Those graces and duties which are commanded us, and to which God hath promised glorious rewards, must not be single or transient acts, but continual and permanent graces. "He that drinks of the water which I shall give him, shall never thirst again."[a]—"He that eats of this bread, shall live for ever."[b]—"He that believes in me, rivers of living water shall flow from his belly."[c]—"He that confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall have mercy."—"Repent and believe, and wash away your sins."—Now these words of πίνων, τρώγων, πιστεύων, μετανοῶν, are of extended and produced signification, as divines observe, and signify a state of duty, such as includes patience and perseverance. Such also are these. "He that doeth the will of my Father, abideth for ever."[d]—"If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity;"[e]—and "they that do such things, shall possess the kingdom of heaven."[f] And, "I will deliver him, because he hath put his trust in me. And, "If ye love him, he also will love us." And "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven."—These and many more do not intend that any one grace alone is sufficient, much less any one act of one grace, proceeding from the Spirit of God, can be sufficient to wipe off our leprosies. But these signify states of duty and integrity; not transient actions, or separate graces. And besides the infinite reasonableness of the thing, this truth is consigned to us plainly in Scripture: God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life."[g] And if men had pleased, they might as well have fallen upon

[a] John, iv. 14. [b] Ibid. vi. 58. [c] Ibid. vii. 38. [d] 1 John, ii. 17.
[e] 1 John, i. 9. [f] Gal. v. 21. [g] Rom. ii. 6, 7.

this proposition, that an act of humility would have procured our pardon, as well as that an act of contrition will do it; because of the words of David, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart; and will save such as be of an humble spirit."[h] Salvation is as much promised to humility alone, as to contrition alone; that is, to neither separately, but in the conjunction with other parts of duty.

62. V. Contrition is either taken in its proper specific signification, and so it is but a part of repentance; and then who can say that it shall be sufficient to a full and final pardon? Repentance alone is not sufficient; there must be faith, and hope, and charity; therefore much less shall a part be sufficient, when the whole is not. But if contrition be taken in a sense comprehending more than itself, then I demand how much shall it involve? That it does include in it an act of the Divine love, and a purpose to confess, and a resolution to amend, is affirmed. So far is well. But why thus far and no further? Why shall not contrition, when it is taken for a sufficient disposition to pardon and salvation, signify as much as repentance does; and repentance signify the whole duty of a converted sinner? Unless it does, repentance itself, that is, as it is one single grace, cannot suffice, as I have proved but now: and therefore how shall contrition alone, much less, an act of contrition alone, do it? For my part, I should be very glad it were so, if God so pleased; for I have as much need of mercy as any man, and have as little reason to be confident of the perfection of my repentance, as any returning sinner in the world. But I would not willingly deceive myself, nor others, and therefore I must take the surest course and follow his measures who hath described the lines and limits of his own mercy. But it is remarkable that the manner of the Scripture is to include the consequents in the antecedents. "He that is of God, heareth God's word:"[i] that is, not only hears, but keeps it. For, 'not the hearer, but the doer, is blessed.' So St. John in the Revelation; "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage of the Lamb."[k] They which are called are blessed; that is, they which being called, come, and come worthily, having on the wedding garment. For without this, the meaning of the Spirit is not full. For "many are called, but few are chosen." And thus also it is

[h] Psalm xxxiv. 17. [i] John, viii. 47. [k] Apoc. xix. 9.

in the present instance: 'God will not despise the contrite heart;' that is, the heart which, being bruised with sorrow, returns to duty, and lives in holiness; for in order to holiness, contrition was accepted.

But one thing I shall remark before I leave this. In the definition of contrition, all the schools of theology in the world that I know of, put 'the love of God.' Contrition is not only sorrow, but a love of God too. Now this doctrine, if they themselves would give men leave rightly to understand it, is not only an excellent doctrine, but will also do the whole business of this great question. Without contrition our sins cannot be pardoned. It is not contrition unless the love of God be in it. Add then but these—Our love to God does not consist in an act of intuition or contemplation, nor yet directly and merely of passion; but it consists in obedience. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments:'—that is our love of God. So that contrition is a detestation of our past sin, and a consequent obedience to the Divine commandments: only as the aversion hath been, so must be the conversion; it was not one act of disobedience only which the habitual sinner is to be contrite for, but many; and therefore so must his contrition be a lasting hatred against sin, and a habitual love, that is, a habitual obedience to the Divine commandment.

63. VI. But now to the instances of David and the prodigal, and the sudden pronunciation of their pardon, there is something particular to be said. The parable of the prodigal can prove nothing but God's readiness to receive every returning sinner: but neither the measures nor the times of pardon are there described. As for David, his pardon was pronounced suddenly, but it was but a piece of pardon; the sentence of death, which by Moses's law he incurred, that only was remitted: but after this pardon, David repented bitterly in sackcloth and ashes, he fasted and prayed, he lived holily and wisely, he made amends as he could; and yet the child died that was born to him, his son and subjects rebelled, his concubines were dishonoured in the face of the sun, and the sword never departed from his house. 2. But to both these and all other instances that are or can be of the like nature, I answer, that there is no doubt but God's pardon is as early and speedy as the beginnings of our repentance;

but then it is such a pardon as is proportionable to the repentance, a beginning pardon, to a beginning repentance. It is one degree of pardon to be admitted to repentance: to have more grace given, to have hopes of final absolution, to be continued in the work of the Lord, to be helped in the mortification of our sins, to be invited forwards, and comforted, and defended, and blessed, still are further progressions of it, and answer to the several parts and perseverance of repentance. And in this sense those sayings of the old doctors are true, but in no other that I know of. To this purpose they are excellent words which were spoken by St. Austin; "Nunquam Deus spernit pœnitentiam, si ei sincerè et simplicitèr offeratur; suscipit, libenter accipit, amplectitur omnia, quatenus eum ad priorem statum revocet:—God never does despise repentance that is sincerely offered to him; he takes all, he embraces all, that he may bring the man to his former state."[1]

64. Obj. 5. But against this doctrine are pretended some sentences of the fathers, expressly affirming that a sinner returning to God, in an instant may be pardoned; even in the last moment of his life, when it is certain nothing can be done, but single acts of contrition or something like it. Thus the author of the book "De Cœna Domini," attributed to St. Cyprian: "Sed et in eodem articulo temporis cum jam anima festinat ad exitum, et egrediens ad labia exspirantis emerserit, pœnitentiam clementissimi Dei benignitas non aspernatur: nec serum est quod verum, nec irremissibile quod voluntarium, et quæcunque necessitas cogat ad pœnitudinem, nec quantitas criminis, nec brevitas temporis, nec horæ extremitas, nec vitæ enormitas, si vera contritio, si pura fuerit voluptatum mutatio, excludit à veniâ, sed in amplitudine sinus sui mater caritas prodigos suscipit revertentes, et velit nolit Novatus hæreticus, omni tempore Dei gratia recipit pœnitentes." Truly this is expressly against the severity of the former doctrine; and if St. Cyprian had been the author of this book, I should have confessed him to be an adversary in this question. For this author affirms, that then when "the soul is expiring, God rejects not the contrition of him who but then returns: though the man be compelled to repentance; though the time be short, and the iniquity was long and great, yet

[1] Serm. 181. de Tempore, c. xvi.

in the last hour, if he be truly contrite, God will not refuse him." To this I say, that he that said these words was one that lived not very long since;[m] then when discipline was broken, and piety was lost, and charity was waxen cold; and since the man's authority is nothing, I need say no more, but that I have been reproving this opinion all this while. But there are words in St. Cyprian's book to Demetrianus, which are confessedly his, and yet seem to promise pardon to dying penitents. "Nec quisquam aut peccatis retardetur aut annis, quo minus veniat ad consequendam salutem. In isto adhuc mundo manenti pœnitentia nulla sera est. Patet ad indulgentiam Dei aditus, et quærentibus atque intelligentibus veritatem facilis accessus est. Tu sub ipso licet exitu et vitæ temporalis occasu pro delictis roges: et Deum qui unus et verus est, confessione et fide agnitionis ejus implores. Venia confitenti datur, et credenti indulgentia salutaris de Divinâ pietate conceditur, et ad immortalitatem sub ipsâ morte transitur." These words are indeed very expressly affirmative of the efficacy of a very late, even of a death-bed repentance, if it should so happen. But the consideration of the person wholly alters the case, and makes it inapplicable to the case of dying Christians. For Demetrianus was then a pagan, and a cruel persecutor of Christians. "Nec saltem contentus es dolorum nostrorum compendio, et simplici ac veloci brevitate pœnarum: admoves laniandis corporibus longa tormenta. Innoxios, justos, Deo caros domo privas, patrimonio spolias, catenis premis, carcere includis, bestiis, gladio, ignibus punis." This man St. Cyprian, according to the Christian charity, which teaches to pray for our persecutors, and to love our enemies, exhorts passionately to believe in Christ, to become a Christian, and though he was very old, yet to repent even then would not be too late. "Hujus sacramento et signo censeamur; Hunc (si fieri potest) sequamur omnes:—Let us all follow Christ; let us all be consigned with his sign and his sacrament."—Now there is no peradventure, but new-converted persons, heathens newly giving up their names to Christ and being baptized, if they die in an hour, and were baptized half an hour after they believe in Christ, are heirs of salvation. And it was impossible to be otherwise; for when the heathen world was

[m] Arnoldus Abbas.

to be converted, and the Gospel preached to all persons, old men, and dying men, it must either be effective to them also of all the promises, or by nothing could they be called to the religion. They who were not Christians, were not to be judged by the laws of Christ. But yet Christians are; and that is a full account of this particular, since the laws of our religion require of us a holy life; but the religion could demand of strangers nothing but to believe, and at first promise to obey, and then to do it accordingly, if they shall live. Now to do this, was never too late; and this is all which is affirmed by St. Cyprian.

65. St. Jerome[n] affirmed, "Nunquam sera est conversio; latro de cruce transit ad Paradisum." And St. Austin;[o] "De nullo desperandum est, quamdiu patientia Dei ad pœnitentiam adducit:"—and again; "De quocunque pessimo in hâc vitâ constituto utique non est desperandum. Nec pro illo imprudenter oratur, de quo non desperatur." Concerning the words of St. Jerome, the same answer will serve which I gave to the words of St. Cyprian; because his instance is of the thief upon the cross, who then came first to Christ: and his case was as if a heathen were new converted to Christianity. "Baptizatus ad horam securus hinc exit," was the rule of the Church.[p] But God requires more holiness of Christians than he did of strangers; and therefore he also expects a longer and more laborious repentance. But of this I have given account in the case of Demetrianus. St. Austin's words press not at all: all that he says is this, "We must despair of no man, so long as the mercy of God leadeth him to repentance." It is true, we must not absolutely despair; but neither must we presume without a warrant: nay, hope as long as God calls effectually. But when the severity of God cuts him off from repentance, by allowing him no time, or not time enough, to finish what is required, the case is wholly differing.

But St. Chrysostom speaks words which are not easy to be reconciled to the former doctrine. The words of St. Chrysostom are these:[q] "Take heed of saying that there is a place of pardon only for them that have sinned but little. For if you please suppose any one abounding with all

[n] Epist. ad Letam, et ad Paulum et Sabissianum.

[o] Serm. xi. de Verb. Dom.; et serm. lviii. de Tempore.

[p] Vide Hist. of the Life of the Holy Jesus, part ii. disc. 9. [q] Ad Theod. Laps.

maliciousness, and that hath done all things which shut men from the kingdom; let this man be not a heathen, but a Christian and accepted of God, but afterward a whoremonger, an adulterer, an effeminate person, unnaturally lustful, a thief, a drunkard, a slanderer, and one that hath diligently committed such crimes, truly I will not be to him an author of despairing, although he hath persevered in these wickednesses to an extreme old age."—Truly neither would I. But neither could he nor any man else be forward to warrant his particular. But if the remaining portion of his old age be well employed, according as the time is, and the spending of that time, and the earnestness of the repentance, and the greatness of the grief, and the heartiness of the return, and the fulness of the restitution, and the zeal of amends, and the abundance of charity, and the largeness of the devotion, so we approach to very many degrees of hope. But there is difference between the case of an extreme old age, and a death-bed. That may have more time, and better faculties, and fitted opportunities, and a clearer choice, and a more perfect resistance between temptation and grace. But for the state of death-bed, although there is in that also some variety, yet the best is very bad, and the worst is stark naught; but concerning the event of both, God only is the judge. Only it is of great use that Chrysostom says in the same letters to Theodorus, "Quodque est majoris facilitatis argumentum, etiamsi non omnem præ se fert pœnitentiam, brevem illam et exiguo tempore factam non abnuit, sed magnâ mercede compensat:—Even a dying person ought not to despair, and leave off to do those little things of which only there is then left to him a possibility; because even that imperfect repentance, done in that little time, God rejects not, but will give to it a great reward." So he did to Ahab. And whatsoever is good, shall have a good; some way or other it shall find a recompense: but every recompense is not eternal glory, and every good thing shall not be recompensed with heaven. To the same purpose is that of Cœlestinus, reproving them that denied repentance to persons, "qui obitus sui tempore hoc animæ suæ cupiunt remedio subveniri,—who at the time of their death desired to be admitted to it." "Horremus, fateor, tantæ impietatis aliquem reperiri, ut de Dei pietate desperet; quasi non posset ad se quovis tempore concurrenti succurrere, et

periclitantem sub onere peccatorum hominem, pondere quo se expedire desiderat, liberare.—I confess (saith he) we abhor that any one should be found to be of so great impiety as to despair of God's mercy: as if he could not at any time relieve him that comes to him, and ease him that runs to be eased of the burden of his sins." "Quid hoc rogo aliud est," &c.—"What else is this but to add death to the dying man, and to kill his soul with cruelty, by denying that he can be absolved, since God is most ready to help, and inviting to repentance, and thus promises, saying, 'In what day soever the sinner shall be converted, his sins shall not be imputed to him;' and again, 'I would not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live?' He therefore takes salvation from a man, who denies him his hoped-for repentance in the time of his death; and he despairs of the clemency of God, who does not believe it sufficient to help the dying man in a moment of time. The thief on the cross hanging on Christ's right hand had lost his reward, if the repentance of one hour had not helped him. When he was in pain, he repented and obtained paradise by one discourse. Therefore the true conversion to God of dying persons, is to be accounted of by the mind rather than by time." Thus far St. Cœlestine.—The sum of which is this: that dying persons must not be thrust into despair: because God's mercy is infinite, and his power is infinite. He can do what he please, and he may do more than we know of, even more than he hath promised; and therefore they that are spiritual, must not refuse to do all that they can to such miserable persons. And in all this there is nothing to be reproved, but that the good man by incompetent arguments goes about to prove what he had a mind to. If the hindering such persons to despair be all that he intends, it is well; if more be intended, his arguments will not do it.

66. Afterward, in the descending ages of the Church, things grew worse, and it began to be good doctrine even in the days of St. Isidore: "Nullus desperare debet veniam, etiamsi circa finem vitæ ad pœnitentiam convertatur. Unumquemque enim Deus de suo fine, non de vitâ præteritâ judicat:[r]—God judges a man by his end, not by his past life; and therefore no man must despair of pardon, though he be not converted till about the end of his life." But in these

[r] Lib. ii. c. 14. de Summo Bono.

words there is a lenitive, " circa finem vitæ;" if he be converted " about the end of his life;" that is, in his last or declining years: which may contain a fair portion of time, like those who were called in the eleventh hour, that is, 'circa finem vitæ,' but not 'in fine;' '*about*,' not '*in* the end of their life.' But St. Austin, or Gennadius, or whoever is author of the book 'De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus,' speaks home to the question, but against the former doctrine.[s] " Pœnitentiâ aboleri peccata indubitanter credimus, etiamsi in ultimo vitæ spiritu admissorum pœniteat, et publicâ lamentatione peccata prodantur, quia propositum Dei, quo decrevit salvare quod perierat, stat immobile: et ideo quia voluntas ejus non mutatur, sive emendatione vitæ si tempus conceditur, sive supplici confessione, si continuò vitâ exceditur, venia peccatorum fideliter præsumatur ab illo, qui non vult mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur à perditione pœnitendo, et salvatus miseratione Domini vivat. Si quis aliter de justissimâ Dei pietate sentit, non Christianus sed Novatianus est;—That sins are taken off by repentance, though it be but in the last breath of our life, we believe without doubting. He that thinks otherwise is not a Christian but a Novatian. If we have time, our sins are taken away by amendment of life; but if we die presently, they are taken off by humble confession."—This is his doctrine. And if he were infallible, there were nothing to be said against it. But to balance this we have a more sober discourse of St. Austin, in these words:[t] " If any man placed in the last extremity of sickness, would be admitted to repentance, and is presently reconciled, and so departs, I confess to you, we do not deny to him what he asks, but we do not presume that he goes hence well. I do not presume, I deceive you not, I do not presume. A faithful man living well, goes hence securely. He that is baptized but an hour before, goes hence securely. He that repents and afterwards lives well, goes hence securely. He that repents at last and is reconciled, whether he goes hence securely I am not secure. Where I am secure, I tell you, and give security; where I am not secure, I can admit to repentance, but I cannot give security." And a little after, " Attend to what I say, I ought to explain clearly what I say, lest any one should misunderstand me. Do I say he shall be damned? I do not say it.

[s] C. lxxx. [t] Lib. 1. hom. 41.

Do I say he shall be pardoned? I do not say it. And what say you to me? I know not. I presume not, I promise not, I know not. Will you free yourself from doubt? Will you avoid that which is uncertain? Repent while thou art in health. For if you do penance while you are well, and sickness find you so doing, run to be reconciled; and if you do so, you are secure. Why are you secure? Because you repented at that time when you could have sinned. But if you repent then when you cannot sin, thy sins have left thee, thou hast not left them. But how know you that God will not forgive him? You say true. How? I know not. I know that, I know not this. For therefore I give repentance to you, because I know not. For if I knew it would profit you nothing, I would not give it you. And if I did know that it would profit you, I would not affright you. There are but these two things. Either thou shalt be pardoned, or thou shalt not. Which of these shall be in thy portion I know not. Therefore keep that which is certain, and let go that which is uncertain." Some suppose these to have been the words of St. Ambrose, not of St. Austin. But St. Austin[u] hath in his sermons "de Tempore" something more decretory than the former discourse. "He that is polluted with the filth of sins, let him be cleansed 'exomologesis satisfactione,—with the satisfaction of repentance.' Neither let him put it off, that he do not require it till his death-bed, where he cannot perform it. For that persuasion is unprofitable. It is nothing for a sinner to repent, unless he finish his repentance. For the voice of the penitent alone is not sufficient for the amendment of his faults: for in the satisfaction for great crimes, not words, but works, are looked after. Truly repentance is given in the last, because it cannot be denied; but we cannot affirm, that they who so ask, ought to be absolved. For how can the lapsed man do penance? How shall the dying man do it? How can he repent who cannot do works of satisfaction or amendment of life? And therefore that repentance which is required by sick men, is itself weak; that which is required by dying men, I fear lest that also die. And therefore whosoever will find mercy of God, let him do his repentance in this world, that he may be saved in the world to come." Higher yet are the words of Paulinus,

[u] Sermon lvii.

bishop of Nola, to Faustus of Rhegium, inquiring what is to be done to death-bed penitents: "Inimicâ persuasione mentitur, qui maculas longâ ætate contractas subitis et inutilibus abolendas gemitibus arbitratur: quo tempore confessio esse potest, satisfactio esse non potest.[x]—He lies with the persuasion of an enemy, who thinks that those stains which have been long contracting can be suddenly washed off with a few unprofitable sighings, at the time when he can confess, but never make amends." And a little after; "Circa exequendam interioris hominis sanitatem, non solùm accipiendi voluntas, sed agendi expectatur utilitas:" and again, "Hujusmodi medicina sicut ore poscenda, ita opere consummanda est." "Then a man repents truly, when what he affirms with his mouth, he can finish with his hand;"—that is, not only declaim against sin, but also mortify it. To which I add the words of Asterius, bishop of Amasea.[y] "At cum debitum tempus adveniet, et indeprecabile decretum corporis et animæ nexum dissolvet, reputatio subibit eorum quæ in vita patrata sunt, et pœnitentia sera et nihil profutura. Tunc enim demum pœnitentia prodest, cum pœnitens emendandi facultatem habet; sublatâ verò copiâ recte faciendi, inutilis est dolor, et irrita pœnitentia:—When the set time shall come, when the irrevocable decree shall dissolve the union of soul and body, then shall the memory of those things return which were done in our lifetime, and a late repentance that shall profit nothing. For then repentance is profitable, when the penitent can amend his fault: but when the power of doing well is taken away, grief is unprofitable, and the repentance vain." Now to the words of Gennadius before quoted, I answer, that they are a fierce reproof of the Novatian doctrine, and too great an earnestness in going so far from them, that he left also the severity, which wise and good men did at that time teach, and ought always to press. He went to cure one error by another, never thinking any contradictory sufficient, unless it were against every thing that the Novatians did say, though also it was said and believed by the orthodox. But I shall resume this discourse in the following chapters, where upon another occasion I shall give account of the severity of the Primitive Church in this article; which at first

[x] Epist. i. Bibl. SS. PP. tom. iii. [y] Homil. de Divit. et Lazaro.

was at least as strict as the severest part of this discourse, till by degrees it lessened and shrunk into the licentiousness and dissolution of the present age.

67. Obj. 6. But if it be necessary to extirpate the habits of sin, and to acquire (being helped by God's grace) the contrary habits of virtue; how can it fare with old and decayed men, or with men that have a lingering, tedious, protracted sickness (for I suppose their case is very near the same), who were intemperate or unchaste all their lifetime, and until they could be so no longer; but how can they obtain the habit of chastity who cannot do any acts of chastity; or of intemperance, who have lost their stomach, and have not any inclination or temptation to the contrary? And every virtue must be 'cum potentiâ ad oppositum;' if it be not chosen, it is not virtue, nor rewardable. And the case is almost the same to all persons young or old, who have not opportunity of acting those graces in the matter of which they have formerly prevaricated.

68. To this I answer many things, and they are of use in the explication of this material question. I. Old men may exercise many acts of chastity both internal and external. For if they may be unchaste, they may also be chaste; but St. Paul speaks of the ἀσελγηκότες, 'men that being past feeling, yet were given to lasciviousness;' ἀνδρόπαιδες ἄνδρες, 'half men, half boys,' 'prurientes in sepulchro.' For it is not the body but the soul that is wanton; and an evil man may sin with ineffective lusts; as he that lusts after a woman whom he cannot have, sins with his soul. Now wherever these unlawful desires can be, there also they can be mortified; and an old man can love to talk of his past vanities, or not rescind them by repentance, or desire that he were young and active in wickedness; and therefore if he chooses not to do so, and therefore avoids these and the like, out of hatred of his old impurities, he does the proper works of that grace, which he also may do the easier, because then his temptations to the contrary are not so strong: but this advantage is not worth staying for so long. They that do so, venture damnation a long time together, and may also have an evil proper to that state, greater than this little advantage I instance.

II. If there were no other act of chastity to be exercised

by old persons, by reason of their disability; yet the very accepting from the hands of God that disability, and the delighting in that circumstance of things, in which it is impossible to sin as formerly, must needs be pleasing to God, because it is a nolition of the former sins, and a desire of pleasing him.

III. Every act of sorrow for unchastity is an act of chastity; and if this sorrow be great and lasting, permanent and habitual, it will be productive of much good. And if to these the penitent adds penal actions and detestations of his crimes, revenge and apt expressions of his holy anger against his sin, these do produce a quality in the soul contrary to that which made him formerly consent to lust.

IV. When a vicious habit is to be extirpated, and the contrary introduced, it is not necessary that the contrary be acted by the body, but be radicated in the soul; it is necessary that the body do not sin in that instance; but it is not always required, that contrary acts be done by the body. Suppose Origen had been a lustful person before his castration, yet he might have been habitually chaste afterward, by doing spiritual acts of a corporal chastity. And there are many sins whose scene lies in the body, to which the body afterward cannot oppose a bodily act in the same instance; as he that by intemperate drinking once or oftener, falls into a loathing of wine: he that dismembers himself; and many others; for which a repentance is possible and necessary, but yet a contrary specific act cannot be opposed. In these cases it is sufficient that the habit be placed in the soul, and a perfect contrary quality superinduced, which is to be done by a frequent repetition of the acts of repentance proper to the sin.

V. There are some sins for which amends is to be made in the way of commutation, when it cannot be in the proper instance. "Redime peccata tua eleemosynis," said Daniel[z] to Nebuchadnezzar;—"Redeem thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor." Our English Bibles read this, "Break off thy sins *by alms;*" as if alms were directly contrary to pride, or lust, or gluttony, or tyranny: and the shewing mercy to the poor a direct intercision and interruption of the sin. He that gives alms that

[z] Dan. iv. 27.

he may keep his lust, loses his soul and his money too. But he that leaves his lust, or is driven from it, and gives alms to obtain God's favour for his pardon, by doing something that is gracious in his eyes, this man is a good penitent; if his alms be great and proportionable, given freely and without constraint, when he can keep them, and receive and retain the temporal advantage, and be assisted by all those other acts and habits, of which his present state is capable. It cannot be said, that to give alms can, in all such cases, be sufficient; as it will be hard to say that so many acts of the contrary grace will suffice to get a habit, or obtain a pardon; but it is true, that to give alms is a proper action of repentance in such cases, and is in order to pardon. For,

VI. As there is a supreme habit of vice, a transcendent vileness, that is, a custom and readiness to do every sin as it is presented in its proper temptation, and this is worse than the habit of any one sin; so there is a transcendent habit of grace, by which a man is so holy, and just, and good, that he is ready to obey God in every instance. That is malice, and this is charity. When a man hath this grace habitually, although it may be so that he cannot produce the proper specific habit opposite to his sin for which he specially repents, yet his supreme habit does contain in it the specific habit virtually and transcendently. An act of this charity will not do this, but the habit will. For he that does a single act of charity, may also do a single act of malice; and he that denies this, knows not what he says, nor ever had experience of himself or any man else. For if he that does an act of charity, that is, he who by a good motion from God's Spirit, does any thing because God hath commanded, to say that this man will do every thing which is so commanded, is to say, that a good man can never fall into a great sin: which is evidently untrue. But if he that does one act in obedience to God, or in love to him (for obedience is love), will also do more, then every man that does one act to please his senses, may as well be supposed that he will do more; and then no man's life should have in it any variety, but be all of a piece, entirely good, or entirely evil. I see no difference in the instances, neither can there be, so long as a man in both states hath a power to choose. But then it will follow, that a single act of contrition, or of charity, cannot put a man into

the state of the Divine favour, it must be the grace or habit of charity; and that is a magazine of habits by equivalence, and is formally the state of grace. And upon these accounts, if old men will repent, and do what they can do, and are enabled in that state, they have no cause to be afflicted with too great fears concerning the instances of their habits, or the sins of their youth. Concerning persons that are seized upon by a lingering sickness, I have nothing peculiar to say, save this only, that their case is in something better than that of old men, in some things worse. It is better, because they have, in many periods of their sickness, more hopes of returning to health and long life, than old men have of returning to strength and youth, and a protracted age: and therefore their repentance, if it be hearty, hath in it also more degrees of being voluntary, and relative to a good life. But in this, their case is worse. An old man that is healthful, is better seated in the station of penitents, and because he can choose contraries, is the more acceptable if he chooses well. But the sick man, though living long in that disadvantage, cannot be indifferent in so many instances as the other may: and in this case, it is remarkable what St. Austin said; "Si autem vis agere pœnitentiam, quando jam peccare non potes, peccata te dimiserunt, non tu illa;—To abstain from sin when a man cannot sin, is to be forsaken by sin, not to forsake it." At the best it is bad enough: but I doubt not but if they do what they can do, there is mercy for them, which they shall find in the day of recompenses.

67. Obj. 7. But how shall any man know, whether he have performed his repentance as he ought? For if it be necessary that he get the habits of virtue, and extirpate the habits of vice; that is, if by habits God do, and we are to make judgments of our repentance, who can be certain that his sins are pardoned, and himself reconciled to God, and that he shall be saved? The reasons of his doubts and fears are these:—1. Because it is a long time before a habit can be lost, and the contrary obtained. 2. Because while one habit lessens, another may undiscernibly increase, and it may be a degree of covetousness may expel a degree of prodigality. 3. Because a habit may be lurking secretly, and for want of opportunity of acting in that instance, not betray itself, or be discovered, or attempted to be cured. For he that

was not tempted in that kind where he sinned formerly, may, for aught he knows, say that he hath not sinned, only because he was not tempted; but if that be all, the habit may be resident, and kill him secretly. These things must be accounted for.

70. I. But to him that inquires whether it be light or darkness, in what regions his inheritance is designed, and whether his repentance is sufficient, I must give rather a reproof than an answer; or at least such an answer as will tell there is no need of an answer. For, indeed, it is not good inquiring into measures and little portions of grace. 'Love God with all thy heart, and all thy strength;' do it heartily, and do it always. If the thing be brought to pass clearly, and discernibly, the pardon is certain, and notorious: but if it be in a middle state, between ebb and flood, so is our pardon too; and if in that undiscerned state it be in the thing certain that thou art on the winning and prevailing side, if really thou dost belong unto God, he will take care both of thy intermedial comfort and final interest. But when people are too inquisitive after comfort, it is a sign their duty is imperfect. In the same proportion also, it is not well when we inquire after a sign for our state of grace and holiness. If the habit be complete and entire, it is as discernible as light, and we may as well inquire for a sign to know when we are hungry and thirsty, when you can walk, or play on the lute. The thing itself is its best indication.

71. II. But if men will quarrel at any truth, because it supposes some men to be in such a case, that they do not know certainly what will become of them in the event of things, I know not how it can be helped; I am sure they that complain here, that is, the Roman doctors, are very fierce preachers of the certainty of salvation, or of our knowledge of it. But be they who they will, since all this uncertainty proceeds not from the doctrine, but from the evil state of things into which habitual sinners have put themselves, there will be the less care taken for an answer. But certainly it seems strange that men who have lived basely and viciously all their days, who are respited from an eternal hell by the miracles of mercy, concerning whom it is a wonderful thing that they had not really perished long before, that these men returning at the last, should complain of hard usage, because

it cannot be told to them as confidently as to new-baptized innocents, that they are certain of their salvation as St. Peter and St. Paul. But, however, both they, and better men than they, must be content with those glorious measures of the Divine mercy which are described, and upon any terms be glad to be pardoned, and to hope and fear, to mourn and to be afflicted, to be humbled and to tremble, and then to 'work out their salvation with fear and trembling.'

72. III. But then, to advance one step further, there may be a certainty where is no evidence; that is, the thing may be certain in itself, though not known to the man; and there are degrees of hope concerning the final event of our souls: for suppose it cannot be told to the habitual sinner, that his habits of sin are overcome, and that the Spirit rules in all the regions of his soul; yet is he sure that his vicious habits do prevail? is he sure that sin does reign in his mortal body? If he be, then let him not be angry with this doctrine; for it is as bad with him as any doctrine can affirm. But if he be not sure that sin reigns, then can he not hope that the Spirit does rule? and if so, then also he may hope that his sins are pardoned, and that he shall be saved. And if he look for greater certainty than that of a holy and a humble hope, he must stay till he have a revelation; it cannot be had from the certainty of any proposition in Scripture applicable to his case and person.

73. IV. If a habit be long before it be mastered, if a part of it may consist with its contrary, if a habit may lurk secretly and undiscernibly, all these things are aggravations of the danger of a habitual sinner, and are very true, and great engagements of his watchfulness and fear, his caution and observance. But, then, not these, nor any thing else, can evacuate the former truths; nor yet ought to make the returning sinner to despair: only this; if he fears that there may be a secret habit unmortified, let him go about his remedy. 2. If he still fears, let him put himself to the trial. 3. If either that does not satisfy him, or he wants opportunity, let him endeavour to increase his supreme habit, the habit of charity, or that universal grace of the love of God, which will secure his spirit against all secret undiscernible vicious affections.

74. V. This only is certain: no man needs to despair

that is alive, and hath begun to leave his sins, and to whom God hath given time, and power, and holy desires. If all these be spent, and nothing remain besides the desires, that is another consideration, and must receive its sentence by the measures of the former doctrine. But for the present, a man ought not to conclude against his hopes, because he finds propensities and inclinations to the former courses remaining in him, even after his conversion. For so it will be always, more or less, and this is not only the remains of a vicious habit, but even of natural inclination in some instances.

75. VI. Then the habit hath lost its killing quality, and the man is freed from his state of ungraciousness, when the habit of virtue prevails, when he obeys frequently, willingly, cheerfully. But if he sins frequently, and obeys his temptations readily; if he delights in sin, and chooses that; that is, if his sins be more than sins of infirmity (as they are described under their proper title), then the habit remains, and the man is in the state of death. But when sentence is given for God, when virtue is the greater ingredient, when all sin is hated, and laboured and prayed against, the remaining evils and strugglings of the serpent are signs of the Spirit's victory, but also engagements of a persevering care and watchfulness, lest they return and prevail anew. He that is converted, and is in his contentions for heaven, is in a good state of being; let him go forward. 'He that is justified, let him be justified still;' but whether just now if he dies he shall be saved or not, we cannot answer, or give accounts of every period of his new life. In what minute or degree of repentance his sins are perfectly pardoned, no man can tell; and it is unreasonable to reprove a doctrine that infers a man to be uncertain, where God hath given no certain notices or measures. If a man will be certain, he must die as soon as he is worthily baptized, or live according to his promises then made. If he breaks them, he is certain of nothing but that he may be saved if he returns speedily, and effectively does his duty. But concerning the particulars, there can no rules be given sufficient to answer every man's case beforehand. If he be uncertain how God's judgment will be of him, let him be the more afraid, and the more humble, and the more cautious, and the more penitent. For in this case,

all our security is not to be derived from signs, but from duty. Duty is the best signification, and God's infinite boundless mercy is the best ground of our confidence.

SECTION VI.

The former Doctrine reduced to Practice.

It now remains that we account concerning the effect of this doctrine; and first, concerning them that are well and vigorous. 2. Them that are old. 3. Them that are dying. All which are to have several usages and receptions, proper entertainments, and exercises of repentance.

The Manner of Repentance and Usage of habitual Sinners, who convert in their timely and vigorous Years.

1. Let every man that thinks of his return, be infinitely careful to avoid every new sin; for it is like a blow to a broken leg, or a burden to a crushed arm. Every little thing disorders the new health, and unfinished recovery. So that every new sin to such a person is a double damage, it pulls him back from all his hopes, and makes his labours vain, and he is as far to seek, and as much to begin again as ever, and more. For so may you see one climbing of a rock, with a great contention, and labour, and danger, if, when he hath got from the foot to the shoulder, he then lets his hold go, he falls lower than where he first set his foot, and sinks deeper by the weight of his own fall. So is the new-converted man who is labouring to overcome the rocks and mountains of his habitual sins; every sin throws him down further, and bruises his very bones in the fall. To this purpose, therefore, is the wise advice of the son of Sirach; "Hast thou sinned? do so no more, but ask pardon for thy former fault: add not sin to sin, for in one a man shall not be unpunished."

> Ergo, ne pietas sit victa cupidine ventris,
> Parcite, vaticinor, cognatas cæde nefandâ
> Exturbare animas; nec sanguine sanguis alatur.[a]

Let not blood touch blood, nor sin touch sin; for we destroy

[a] Metamorph. xv. 173. Gierig.

our souls with impious hands, when a crime follows a habit, like funeral processions in the pomps and solemnities of death.

2. II. At the beginning of his recovery, let the penitent be armed by special cautions against the labours and difficulties of the restitution: and consider, that if sin be so pleasant, it is the habit that hath made it so; it is become easy and natural by the custom: and, therefore, so may virtue. And complain not that nature helps and corroborates the habits of sin: for besides that nature doth this mischief but in some instances, not in all; the grace of God will as much assist the customs and labours of virtue, as nature doth the habits of vice. And choose whether you will. Take any institution or course of life, let it at first be never so violent, use will make it pleasant. And therefore we may make virtue as certain as vice is, as pleasing to the spirit, as hard to be removed, as perfective of our nature as the other is destructive; and make it by assuefaction as impossible to be vicious, as we now think it difficult and impossible to overcome flesh and blood. But let him remember this also, that it will be a strange shame, that he can be in a state of sin and death, from which it will be very hard to remove, and to confess our natures so caitiff and base, that we cannot as easily be united unto virtue; that he can become a devil, and cannot be like an angel; that he can decline to the brutishness of beasts, and yet never arise up to a participation of the excellent beauties of the intellectual world.

3. III. He that undertakes the repentance of his vicious habits, when he hath strength and time enough for the work, must do it in kind; that is, he must oppose a habit to a habit, every contrary to its contrary: as chastity to his wantonness, temperance to his gluttony or drunkenness: the reason is, because if he had contracted the habit of a sin, especially of youthful sins, unless the habit of virtue be opposed to the instance of his sin, he cannot be safe, nor penitent. For while the temptation and fierce inclinations remain, it cannot be a cure to this to do acts of charity; he must do acts of chastity, or else he will fall or continue in his uncleanness; which in old persons will not be. Here the sin still tempts by natural inclination, and commands by the habit; and therefore as there can be no repentance while the affections remain,

so neither can there be safety as long as the habit hath a natural being. The first begins with a moral revocation of the sin; and the same hath also its progression, perfection, and security, by the extinction of the inherent quality.

4. IV. Let the penitent seek to obstruct or divert the proper principles of evil habits; for by the same by which they begin, commonly by the same they are nursed up to their ugly bulk. There are many of them that attend upon the prince of darkness, and minister to the filthy production. Evil examples, natural inclinations, false propositions, evil prejudices, indulgence to our own infirmities, and many more: but especially, a cohabitation with the temptation, by which we fell and did enter into death, and by which we use to fall. There are some men more in love with the temptation than the sin; and because this rushes against the conscience rudely, and they see death stand at the end of the progression, therefore they only love to stand upon Mount Ebal and view it. They resolve they will not commit the sin, they will not be overcome, but they would fain be tempted. If these men will but observe the contingencies of their own state, they shall find that when they have set the house on fire, they cannot prescribe its measures of burning.—But there is a secret iniquity in it.—For he that loves to stand and stare upon the fire that burnt him formerly, is pleased with the warmth and splendour, and the temptation itself hath some little correspondences to the appetite.—The man dares not fornicate, but loves to look upon the beauties of a woman, or sit with her at the wine, till his heart is ready to drop asleep. He will not enter into the house, because it is infected with the plague, but he loves to stand at the door, and fain would enter if he durst;—it is impossible that any man should love to abide by a temptation for a good end.—There is some little sensuality in being tempted:—and the very consideration concerning it, sometimes strikes the fancy too unluckily, and pleases some faculty or other, as much as the man dares admit. I do not say that to be tempted is always criminal, or in the neighbourhood of it; but it is the best indication of our love to God, for his sake to deny its importunity, and to overcome it: but that is only when it is unavoidable and from without, against our wills, or at least besides our purposes. For in the declination of sin, and

overcoming temptation, there can be but these two things by which we can signify our love to God. 1. To stand in a temptation when we could not avoid it. 2. And to run from it, when we can. This hath in it more of prudence, and the other of force and spiritual strength: and we can best signify the sense of our weakness, and our carefulness by avoiding the occasions: but then we declare the excellence of our purposes, and pertinacious love to God, when we serve him in hard battles, when we are tempted as before, but fall not now as we did then. Indeed this is the greatest trial; and when God suffers us so to be tried, we are accepted if we stand in that day, and in such circumstances. But he that will choose that state, and dwell near his danger, loves not to be safe; and either he is a vain person in the confidences of his own strength, or else he loves that which is like a sin, and comes as near it as he dare; and very often, the event of it is, that at last he dies like a fly about a candle. But he that hath fallen by such a neighbourhood, and still continues the cause, may as well hope to cure his fever by full draughts of the new vintage, as return to life upon that account. A vicious habit is maintained at an easy rate, but not cured without a mighty labour and expense: any thing can feed it, but nothing can destroy it, if there be any thing near it, whereby it can be kept alive. If therefore you will cure a vicious habit, dwell far from danger, and tempt not death, with which you have been so long in love.

5. V. A vicious habit never could have come to that state and period but by impunity. If God had smitten the sinner graciously in the beginning of his evil journey, it is likely that as Balaam did, he also would have offered to go back. Now when God does not punish a sinner early, though it hath in it more of danger and less of safety, yet we may in some measure supply the want of Divine mercy smiting and hindering a sinner, by considering that impunity is no mark of innocence, but very often it is an indication of God's extremest and final anger. Therefore be sure ever to suspect a prosperous sin. For of itself prosperity is a temptation, and it is granted but to few persons to be prosperous and pious. The poor and the despised, the humble and neccessitous; he that daily needs God with a sharpness of apprehension, that feeds upon necessity, and lives in hardships,

that is never flattered, and is never cheated out of virtue for bread, those persons are likely to be wise and wary; and if they be not, nothing can make them so; for he that is impatient in want, is impotent in plenty; for impatience is pride, and he that is proud when he is poor, if he were rich he would be intolerable; and therefore it is easier to bear poverty temperately than riches.

Securo nihil est te, Nævole, pejus; eodem
Sollicito nihil est, Nævole, te melius.[b]

And Passienus said of Caligula, "Nemo fuit servus melior, nemo dominus deterior:—He was the best servant, and the worst master, that ever was."[c] Poverty is like a girdle about our loins, it binds hard, but it is modest and useful. But a heap of riches is a heap of temptations, and few men will escape, if it be always in their hand what can be offered to their heart. And therefore to be prosperous hath in itself enough of danger. But when a sin is prosperous and unpunished, there are left but few possibilities and arguments of resistance, and therefore it will become or remain habitual respectively. St. Paul taught us this secret, that sins are properly made habitual upon the stock of impunity. "Sin taking occasion by the law wrought in me all concupiscence,"[d] ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα,—"apprehending impunity," διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς, —"by occasion of the commandment," viz. so expressed and established as it was. Because in the commandment forbidding to lust or covet, there was no penalty annexed, or threatened in the sanction or in the explication. Murder was death, and so was adultery and rebellion. Theft was punished severely too; and so other things in their proportion; but the desires God left under a bare restraint, and affixed no penalty in the law. Now sin, that is, men that had a mind to sin, taking occasion hence, that is, taking this impunity for a sufficient warrant, prevailed by frequent actions up to an evil custom and a habit, and so ruled them who were not renewed and overruled by the Holy Spirit of grace. Ἀφορμὴ signifies 'a caution in law,' or a security; so Suidas and Phavorinus. It is used also for 'impunity' in Demosthenes, though the grammarians note it not. But as to the thing. Whenever you see a sin thrive, start back

[b] Epigr. lib. iv. Ep. 84. [c] Ann. VI. c. 20. Ruperti. [d] Rom. vii. 8.

suddenly and with a trembling fear: for it does nurse the sin from a single action to a filthy habit, and that always dwells in the suburbs of the horrible regions. No man is so much to be pitied, as he that thrives and is let alone in his sin: there is evil towards that man. But then God is kind to a sinner, when he makes his sin to be uneasy and troublesome.

6. VI. But in prosecution of the former observation, it is of very great use that the vigorous and healthful penitent do use corporal mortifications and austerities, by way of penance and affliction for every single act of that sin he commits, whose habit he intends to mortify. If he makes himself smart, and never spare his sin but still punish it, besides that it is a good act of indignation and revenge which St. Paul commends in all holy penitents, it is also a way to take off the pleasure of the sin, by which it would fain make abode and seizure upon the will. A man will not so soon delight, or love to abide with that which brings him affliction in present, and makes his life miserable. This advice I learn from Maimonides:[d] "Ab inolitâ peccandi consuetudine non posse hominem avelli nisi gravibus pœnis;—Nothing so good to cure an evil custom of sinning, as the inflicting great smart upon the offender." He that is going to cure his habitual drunkenness; if ever he be overtaken again, let him for the first offence fast two days with bread and water; and the next time double his smart; and let the man load himself till he groans under it, and he will be glad to take heed.

7. VII. He that hath sinned often, and is now returning, let him watch if ever his sin be offered to him by a temptation, and that temptation dressed as formerly; that he be sure not to neglect that opportunity of beginning to break his evil habit; he that hath committed fornication, and repents, if ever he be tempted again not to seek for it, but to act it, and may enter upon the sin with ease and readiness, then let him refuse his sin so dressed, so ready, so fitted for action, and the event will be this, that besides it is a great indication and sign of an excellent repentance, it discountenances the habit, and breaks the combination of its parts, and disturbs its dwelling; but besides it is so signal an action of repentance, and so pleasing to the Spirit of God, and of a

[d] Moreh Nevoch. 341.

good man, that it is apt to make him do so again, and proceed to crucify that habit, upon which he hath had so lucky a day, and so great a victory and success. It is like giving to a person, and obliging him by some very great favour. He that does so, is for ever after ready and apt to do that obliged person still more kindness, lest the first should perish. When a man hath gotten an estate together, he is apt, saith Plutarch, to save little things, and be provident even of the smallest sum, because that now if it be saved, will come to something, it will be seen and preserved in his heap. But he that is poor, cannot become rich with those little arts of providence; and therefore he lets them go to his pleasure, since he cannot keep them with hopes to improve his bank: so is such an earnest and entry into piety; it is such a stock of holiness, that it is worth preserving; and to have resisted once so bravely, does add confidence to the spirit that it can overcome, and makes it probable that he may get a crown. However it falls out, it is an excellent act and signification of a hearty repentance and conversion.

Ἀνὴρ δίκαιός ἐστιν, οὐχ' ὁ μὴ ἀδικῶν,
Ἀλλ' ὅστις ἀδικεῖν δυνάμενος μὴ βούλεται.[e]

'He is a just man, not whosoever does no wrong, but he that can and will not.' Maimonides saith excellently to the same purpose. For to the question, "Quænam tandem est pœnitentia perfecta?" he answers,—This is the true and perfect repentance, "cum quis ad manum habet, quo prius peccavit, et jam penes ipsum est, idem perpetrare, recedens tamen illud non committit pœnitentiæ causâ, neque timore cohibitus neque defectu virium;[f]—when the power and opportunity are present, and the temptation, it may be, ready and urging, when it is in a man's hand to do the same thing, yet retiring he commits it not, only for piety or repentance sake, not being restrained by fear or want of powers."

8. VIII. If such opportunities of his sin be not presented, it is never the worse: the penitent need not be fond of them, for they are dangers which prove death, if they be not triumphed over; and if they be, yet the man hath escaped a danger, and may both prove and act his repentance without

[e] Philemon. Walpole. Com. Græc. frag. quæd. p. 49.
[f] Canon Pœnit. c. ii. 1.

it. But therefore he that is not so tried and put to it, must do all that which he is put to, and execute his fierce anger against the sin, and by proper instances of mortification endeavour the destruction of it; and although every man hath not so glorious a trial and indication of his repentance as in the former instance, yet he that denies himself in any instance of his sin, and so in all that he can or is tempted in, does the same thing; all the same duty, and with less danger, and with less gloriousness. But if it happen that his sin urge him not at all as formerly, or the occasion is gone, and the matter is subtracted, he is to follow the measures of old men described in the next section.

9. IX. Let the penitent be infinitely careful that he does not mortify one vicious habit by a contrary vice, but by a contrary virtue. For to what purpose is it that you are cured of prodigality, and then die by covetousness?

Quid te exempta juvat spinis de millibus una?

It is not this or that alone that is contrary to God. Every vicious habit is equally his enemy; and he that exterminates one vice and entertains another, hath destroyed the vice, but not the viciousness; he hath quitted the instance, but not the irregularity; he hath served the interest of his fortune or his pleasure, his fame or his quiet, his passion or his humour, but not his virtue and relations to God. By changing his vice for another, he is convinced of his first danger, but enters not into safety; he is only weary of his fever, and changes it into the ease of a dead palsy; and it is in them as in all sharp sicknesses, that is always the worst that is actually upon him; and the man dies by his imaginary cure, but real sickness.

10. X. When the mortification of a vicious habit is attempted, and is found difficult and pertinacious, not flexible or malleable by the strokes of contrition and its proper remedies, it is a safe way if the penitent will take some course to disable the sin, and make it impossible to return in the former instance, provided it be done by a lawful instrument. Origen took an ill course to do it, but resolved he would mortify his lust, and make himself a eunuch. But a solemn vow were an excellent instrument to restrain the violences of a frequent temptation, if the person were to be trusted

with it; that is, if he were a constant person, not giddy nor easy to revolt, but of a pertinacious nature, or of so tender conscience, that he durst not for the world break his vow. But this remedy is dangerous where the temptations return strongly. But there are some others which are safer. Cut off the occasion wholly. Defy the concubine publicly, and disgrace her, make it impossible for her to consent to thee if thou shouldest ask her. If thy lord or master tempts thee to drunkenness, quit his service, or openly deny him. Make thy face unpleasant, and tear off the charms from thy beauty, that thou mayest not be courted any more. This is a fierceness and zeal of repentance, but very fit to be used when milder courses will not cure thee.

——— Scelerum si benè pœnitet,
Eradenda cupidinis
Pravi sunt elementa; et teneræ nimis
Mentes asperioribus
Formandæ studiis ——— [g].

If thou repentest truly, pluck up sin by the roots, take away its principle, strangle its nurse, and destroy every thing that can foment it.

11. XI. It was not well with thee when thou didst first enter into the suburbs of hell by single actions of sin; but they were transient, and passed off sooner than the habit: but when this did supervene, a man's acts of malice were enlarged and made continual to each other; that is, joined by a common term of affection and delight in sin, and perfect subjection to its accursed empire. But now in thy return consider proportionably concerning thy actions of repentance and piety, whether they be transient or permanent? Good men often say their prayers, and choose good forms and offices, the best they can, and they use them with an earnest and an actual devotion; but he that hath prayed long and well, yet when he rises, it may be, he cannot tell all the particulars which he begged of God. I doubt not but those prayers which contain matter in them agreeable to his usual and constant desires, and are actually attended to in the time of their use, are recorded in heaven, and there will abide to procure the blessing, and towards the accounts of eternity. But then it is to be observed, that those transient

[g] Hor. iii. Od. 24. 50. Gesner.

acts of devotion, or other volatile and fugitive instances of repentance, are not the proper and proportioned remedy to the evil of vicious habits. There must be something more permanent. Therefore let the penitent make no sudden resolutions, but first consider them well, and imprint them upon his spirit, and renew them often, and call them to mind constantly and at certain periods; let him use much meditation upon the matter of his repentance and remedy; and let his prayers be the same, passionate, material, alike expressed, and made the business of much of our time. For our spirit by use must be made holy, and by assiduity of reading, of praying, of meditating, and acts of self-denial, be accustomed to the yoke of Jesus: for let the habit be firm as a rock, united and hard as stone, it will be broken and made soft by a continual dropping.

The proper Repentance and Usage of Sinners, who return not till their Old Age.

12. I. Let all such penitents be reminded, that their sins will not so easily be pardoned as the sins of younger persons, whose passions are greater, and their reason less, and their observations loose, and their experience trifling. But now God hath long expected the effects of wise and sober counsels. The old man in the comedy did so to his son.

> Dum tempus ad eam rem tulit, sivi, animum ut expleret suum;
> Nunc, hic dies aliam vitam adfert, alios mores postulat;
> Dehinc postulo, sive æquum est, te oro Dave, ut redeat jam in viam.[h]

And God does so to us. And therefore follies of old age are upbraidings of a man, and confusions to his spirit.

> ——— Damasippus ad illos
> Thermarum calices, inscriptaque lintea vadit,
> Maturus bello ———.[i]

To have a grave wise man wrangle for nutshells, and a judge scramble for apples, is an indecency bigger than the sin, and dishonours him by the disproportion.

> Quædam cum primâ resecentur crimina barbâ.[k]

Damasippus should have gone to the Armenian wars, or

[h] Andria. act. i. scen. 2. 15. Schmieder.
[i] Juv. viii. 167. Rupert. [k] Ibid. 166.

been charging a Parthian horseman, when he went to the baths, and hired an unfortunate woman standing under the titles: and every old man should have been gray with sorrow and carefulness, and have passed many stages of his repentance long before he now begins; and therefore he is not only straitened for want of time, but hath a greater work to do, by how much the longer he hath stayed, and yet is the more unable to do it. The greatness of his need hath diminished his power; and the more need he hath of grace, the less he shall have. But however, with such helps as they have, they must instantly set upon their work.

——— Breve sit quod turpiter audes.

But they have abode in their sin too long; let them now therefore use such abbreviatures and hastenings of return as can be in their power.

13. II. Let every old man that repents of the sins of his evil life, be very diligent in the search of the particulars; that by drawing them into a heap, and spreading them before his eyes, he may be mightily ashamed at their number and burden. For even a good man will have cause to be ashamed of himself, if the single sins respersed over his whole life were drawn into a body of articles, and united in the accusation; but then for a man who is grown old in iniquity, to see in one entire view the scheme of his impiety, the horrible heaps of damnation amassed together, will probably have this event, it will make him extremely ashamed, it will make himself most ready to judge and condemn himself, it will humble him to the earth, and make him cry mightily for pardon, and these are good dispositions towards it.

14. III. Let the penitent make some vigorous opposition to every kind of sin of which he hath been particularly guilty by frequent actions; as to adultery, or any kind of uncleanness, let him oppose all the actions of purity which he can in that state, which may best be done, by detestation of his former follies, by praying for pardon, by punishing himself, by sorrow, and all its instruments and apt expressions. But in those instances where the material part remains, and the powers of sinning in the same kind, let him be sure to repent in kind. As if he were habitually intemperate, let him now correct and rule his appetite; for God

will not take any thing in exchange for that duty which may be paid in kind.

15. IV. Although this is to be done to the kinds of sin, yet it cannot be so particularly done to the numbers of the actions; not only because it will be impossible for such persons to know their numbers, but because there is not time left to make little minute proportions: if he had fewer, all his time and all his powers would be little enough for the repentance; and therefore having many, it is well if upon any terms, if upon the expense of all his faculties and labour, he can obtain pardon. Only this: the greater the numbers are, the more firm the habit is supposed; and therefore there ought in general to be made the more vigorous opposition; and let the acts of repentance be more frequently exercised in the proper matter of that virtue which is repugnant to that proper state of evil. And let the very number be an argument to thee of a particular humiliation; let it be inserted into thy confessions, and become an aggravation of thy own misery, and of God's loving-kindness if he shall please to pardon thee.

16. V. Every old man that but then begins to repent, is tied to do more in the remaining portions of time, than the more early penitents in so much time, because they have a greater account to make, more evil to mourn for, more pertinacious habits to rescind, fewer temptations upon the accounts of nature, but more upon their own superinduced account; that is, they have less excuse and a greater necessity to make haste.

> Cogimur a suetis animum suspendere rebus,
> Atque ut vivamus, vivere desinimus.[1]

He must unlearn what he had learned before, and break all his evil customs, doing violence to his own and to his superinduced nature. But therefore this man must not go moderately in his return, but earnestly,—vigorously,—zealously; —and can have no other measures but to do all that he can do. For in his case every slow progression is a sign of the apprehension of his danger and necessity; but it is also a sign that he hath no affection to the business, that he leaves his sins as a merchant does his goods in a storm, or a wounded

[1] Cornel. Gal.

man endures his arm to be cut off; when there is no help for it, the thing must be done, but he is not pleased with the employment.

17. VI. Let every old man entering into the state of repentance, use all the earnestness he can to heighten his affections, to fix his will and desires upon the things of God; to have no gust, no relish, for the things of the world, but that all his earnestness, his whole inner man, be entirely taken up with his new employment. For since it is certain there will be a great poverty of external acts of many virtues, which are necessary in his case, unless they be supplied with internal actions, and the earnestness of the spirit, the man will go poor, and blind, and naked, to his grave. It is the heart which in all things makes the outward act to be acceptable; and if the heart be right, it makes amends for the unavoidable omission of the outward expression. But, therefore, by how much the more old men are disabled from doing the outward and material actions to extirpate the natural quality and inherent mischief of vicious habits; by so much the more must they be supplied, and the grace acted and signified by the actions of the spirit.

18. VII. Let old men in their state of repentance be much in alms and prayers, according to their ability, that by doing good to others, and glory to God, they may obtain the favour of God, who delights in the communications of goodness and in such sacrifices. This the apostle[m] expresses thus: "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices" εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεὸς,—"God is well pleased;" it is like a propitiatory sacrifice, and therefore proper for this man's necessities. The proper arguments to endear this are reckoned in their own place; but the reason why this is most apposite to the state of an old man's repentance, is because they are excellent suppletories to their other defects, and by way of impetration obtain of God to pardon those habits of vice, which in the natural way they have now no external instrument to extinguish.

19. VIII. But because every state hath some temptations proper to itself, let old men be infinitely careful to suppress their own lusts and present inclinations to evil. If an old man out of hatred to sin does mortify his covetous desires,

[m] Heb. xiii. 16.

ἔχει καλὸν βαθμον,—"he hath purchased a good degree" in the station of penitents, and hath given an excellent indication of a true repentance, and conversion from sin to God. Let old men, if there be need, be apt to learn, and so mortify that pride and morosity that usually do attend their age; who think their gray hairs title enough to wisdom, and sufficient notices of things. Let them be gentle to others, patient of the evil accidents of their state, bountiful and liberal, as full of good example as they can; and it is more than probable, that if they yield not to that by which they can then be tempted, they have quit all their affections to sin, and it is enough that they are found faithful in that in which they are now tried.

20. IX. Let old men be very careful that they never tell the story of their sins with any pleasure or delight; but as they must 'recolligere annos in amaritudine,—call to mind their past years in the bitterness of their soul,' so when they speak of any thing of it, they must not tell it as a merry story, lest they be found to laugh at their own damnation.

> Mutatus ———
> Dices, Heu! quoties te in speculo videris alterum,
> Quæ mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit?
> Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genæ? [n]

Trouble and sorrow will better become the spirit of an old sinner, because he was a fool when he was young, and weak when he is wise; that his strengths must be spent in sin, and that, for God and wise courses, nothing remains but weak hands, and dim eyes, and trembling knees.

21. X. Let not an old sinner and young penitent ever think that there can be a period to his repentance, or that it can ever be said by himself that he hath done enough. No sorrow, no alms, no affliction, no patience, no sacraments, can be said to have finished his work, so that he may say with St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course;" nothing can bring consummation to his work till the day of his death, because it is all the way an imperfect state, having in it nothing that is excellent or laudable, but only upon the account of a great necessity and misery on one side, and a great mercy on the other. It is like a man condemned to perpetual banishment; he is always in his passive obedience,

[n] Hor. lib. iv. Od. 10. Mitsch.

but is a debtor to the law, until he be dead. So is this penitent; he hath not finished his work, or done a repentance in any measure proportionable to his sins, but only because he can do no more; and yet he did something, even before it was too late.

22. XI. Let an old man, in the mortification of his vicious habits, be curious to distinguish nature from grace, his own disability from the strengths of the Spirit; and not think that he hath extirpated the vice of uncleanness, when himself is disabled to act it any longer; or that he is grown a sober person, because he is sick in his stomach, and cannot drink intemperately, or dares not for fear of being sick. His measures must be taken by the account of his actions and oppositions to his former sins, and so reckon his comfort.

23. XII. But upon whatever account he come, he is not so much to account concerning his hopes, or the performance of his duty, by abstaining from sin, as by doing of good. For besides that such a not committing of evil may be owing to weak or insufficient principles, this not committing evil in so little a time, cannot make amends for the doing it so long together, according to the usual accounts of repentance, unless that abstaining be upon the stock of virtue and labour, of mortification and resistance; and then every abstinence is also a doing good, for it is a crucifying of the old man with the affections and lusts. But all the good that by the grace of God he superadds, is matter of choice, and the proper actions of a new life.

24. XIII. After all this done, vigorously, holily, with fear and caution, with zeal and prudence, with diligence and an uninterrupted observation, the old man that lived a vile life, but repents in time, though he stayed as long as he could, and much longer than he should, yet may live in hope, and die in peace and charity. To this purpose they are excellent words which St. Austin° said: "Peradventure some will think that he hath committed such grievous faults, that he cannot now obtain the favour of God. Let this be far from the conceits of all sinners. O man, whosaever thou art, that attendest that multitude of thy sins, wherefore dost thou not attend to the omnipotence of the heavenly physician? For since God will have mercy because he is good, and can because

° Serm. xxviii. de Temp.

he is almighty, he shuts the gate of the Divine goodness against himself, who thinks that God cannot or will not have mercy upon him, and therefore distrusts either his goodness or his almightiness."

The proper Repentance and Usage of Sinners, who repent not until their Death-bed.

The inquiry after this article consists in these particulars.

1. What hopes are left to a vicious ill-lived man, that repents on his death-bed, and not before?
2. What advices are best, or can bring him most advantage?

25. That a good life is necessary; that it is required by God; that it was designed in the whole purpose of the Gospel; that it is a most reasonable demand, and infinitely recompensed by the very smallest portions of eternity. That it was called for all our life, and was exacted by the continual voice of Scripture, of mercies, of judgment, of prophets. That to this very purpose God offered the assistance of his Holy Spirit; and to this ministry we were supplied with preventing, with accompanying, and persevering grace; that is, powers and assistances to begin, and to continue in well-doing. That there is no distinct covenant made with dying men, differing from what God hath admitted between himself and living healthful persons. That it is not reasonable to think God will deal more gently with persons who live viciously all their lives, and that at an easier rate they may expect salvation at the hands of God whom they have so provoked, than they who have served him faithfully according to the measures of a man; or that a long impiety should be sooner expiated than a short one. That the easiness of such as promise heaven to dying penitents after a vicious life, is dangerous to the very being and constitution of piety, and scandalous to the honour, and reputation, and sanctity, of the Christian religion. That the grace of God does leave those that use it not. That therefore the necessity of dying men increases, and their aids are lessened and almost extinguished; that they have more to do than they have either time or strength to finish. That all their vows and holy purposes are useless, and ineffective as to their natural production;

and that in their case they cannot be the beginnings of a succeeding duty and piety, because for want of time it never can succeed. That there are some conditions and states of life, which God hath determined never to pardon. That there is a sin unto death, for which because we have no encouragement to pray, it is certain there is no hope; for it is impossible but it must be very fit to pray for all them to whom the hope of pardon is not precluded. That there is in Scripture mention made of an ineffective repentance, and of a repentance to be repented of, and that the repentance of no state is so likely to be it as this. That what is begun and produced wholly by affrightment is not esteemed matter of choice, nor a pleasing sacrifice to God. That 'they who sow to the flesh, shall reap in the flesh,' and the final judgment shall be made of 'every man according to his works.' That the full and perfect descriptions of repentance in Scripture, are heaps and conjugations of duties, which have in them difficulty, and require time, and ask labour. That those insinuations of duty in Scripture, of the need of patience, and diligence, and watchfulness, and the express precepts of perseverance, do imply, that the office and duty of a Christian are of a long time, and business, and a race. That repentance being the renewing of a holy life, it should seem that on our death-bed the day for repentance is past, since no man can renew his life when his life is done, no man can live well, when he cannot live at all; and therefore to place our hopes upon a death-bed repentance only, is such a religion as satisfies all our appetites, and contradicts none, and yet promises heaven at last.—These things, I say, are all either notorious and evident, or expressly affirmed in Scripture; and therefore that, in the ordinary way of things, in the common expectation of events, such persons are in a very sad condition.

26. So that it remains, that in this sad condition there must be some extraordinary way found out, or else this whole inquiry is at an end. Concerning which, all that I can say is this: 1. God hath an almighty power, and his mercy is as great as his power. He can do miracles of mercy, as well as miracles of mightiness. And this St. Austin brings in open pretence against desperation. "O homo, quicunque illam multitudinem peccatorum attendis, cur et omnipotentiam

cœlestis medici non attendis?" Thy sins are great, but God's mercies are greater. But this does represent the man's condition at the best to be such, that God may, if he will, have mercy upon him; but whether he will or no, there is as yet no other certainty or probability, but that he can if he please: which proposition to an amazed, timorous person, that fears a hell the next hour, is so dry a story, so hopeless a proposition, that all that can be said of this, is, that it is very fit that no man should ever put it to the venture. For upon this argument, we may as well comfort ourselves upon him that died without repenting at all. But the inquiry must be further.

27. II. All mankind, all the doctors of the Church for very many ages at least, some few of the most ancient and of the modern excepted, have been apt to give hopes to such persons, and no man bids them absolutely despair. Let such persons make use of this easiness of men, thereby to retain so much hope as to make them call upon God, and not to neglect what can then be done.

Spem retine, spes una hominem nec morte relinquit.

As long as there is life there is hope, and when a man dies let him not despair; for there is a life after this, and a hope proper to that; and amidst all the evils that the ancients did fabulously report to be in Pandora's box, they wittily placed hope on the utmost lip of it, and extremity.

Vivere spe vidi qui moriturus erat.

And St. Cyprian exhorts old Demetrianus to turn Christian in his old age, and promises him salvation in the name of Christ; and though his case, and that of a Christian who entered into promises and covenants of obedience, be very different; yet 'ad immortalitatem sub ipsâ morte transitur,' a passing from such a repentance to immortality, although it cannot be hoped for upon the just accounts of express promise, yet it is not too great to hope from God's mercy: and until that which is infinite hath a limit, a repenting man's hopes in this world cannot be wholly at an end.

28. III. We find that in the battles which were fought by the Maccabees, some persons who fought on the Lord's side, and were slain in the fight, were found having on their

breasts ἱερώματα, or 'pendants' consecrate to the idols of the Jamnenses, and yet the good people of their party made oblation for them, hoping that they might be partakers of a blessed resurrection. They that repent heartily but one hour, are in a better condition than the other that died in their sin, though with the advantage of fighting in a good cause: and if good people will not leave hoping for such persons, it is not fit that themselves should.

29. IV. He that considers God's great love to mankind, the infinite love that God hath to his holy son Jesus, and yet that he sent him to die for every man; and that the holy Jesus does now, and hath for very many ages, prayed for the pardon of our sins, that he knows how horrible those pains are which are provided for perishing souls, and therefore that he is exceeding pitiful, and desirous that we should escape them; and that God did give one extraordinary example of saving a dying penitent, the thief upon the cross, and though that had something in it extraordinary and miraculous, yet that is it which is now expected, a favour extraordinary, a miraculous mercy. And that Christ was pleased to speak a parable of comfort, and the master of the vineyard did pay salary to him that began to work at the eleventh hour; and though that was some portion of his life, the twelfth part of it, and the man was not called sooner, yet there may be something in it of comfort to the dying penitent, since it looks something like it, it certainly relates to old men, and can do them comfort, and possibly the merciful intention of it is yet larger; and that since God is so well pleased with repentance, it may be, he will abate the circumstance of time, "nec ad rem pertinet ubi inciperet, quod placuerat ut fieret," and he will not consider when that begins, which he loves should be done. And that he is our father, and "paulum supplicii satis est patri," a father will chastise, but he will not kill, his son. And that it is, therefore, seasonable to hope, because it is a duty, and the very hope itself God delights to reward; for so said the apostle; "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."[p] And the Church of God, imitating the mercies of our gracious God and Father, hath denied to give the sacrament of peace and mercy to none that seek it: "Viaticum omnibus in morte positis non est

[p] Heb. x. 35.

negandum."[q] And in the saddest consideration of things that can be, suppose it be with him as with Simon Magus, suppose that he is 'in the gall of bitterness,' in the state of damnation, in the guilt of a sin which we know not whether God will pardon or not, yet still it is wise and pious counsel, that he should 'pray, if peradventure he may be forgiven.' He, I say, that considers these things, will have cause to be very earnest and very busy to lose no time, to remit no labour, to quit no hope, but humbly, passionately, diligently, set upon that duty of repentance, which should have long ago come to some perfection. Now, because I have, as I suppose, said enough to make men afraid to put off their repentance to their death-bed, yet in behalf of those who have been unfortunately lost in their lives, or less instructed, or violently tempted, or unhappily betrayed, and are upon their death-beds, because though nothing can be ascertained to them, yet it is not to be suffered that they should utterly despair, I have thought fit to transcribe, out of the writings of the ancient doctors, such exhortations as may both instruct and comfort, promote duty, and give some little door of hope, but not add boldness in defiance of all the laws of holiness.

30. In an epistle of Celestine, bishop of Rome, in St. Austin's time, we find these words; "Vera ad Deum conversio in ultimis positorum, mente potiùs æstimanda est quàm tempore. Quum ergo Dominus sit cordis inspector, quovis tempore non est deneganda pœnitentia postulanti, quum ille se obliget Judici, cui occulta omnia noverit revelari: — True conversion is to be accounted of by the mind, rather than by time. Therefore, repentance is not to be denied to him, who at any time asks it." And he despairs of the clemency of God, who thinks it not sufficient, or that it cannot relieve the sinner in an instant. "Donec sumus in hâc vitâ, quantacunque nobis acciderint peccata, possibile est omnia ablui per pœnitentiam," said St. Austin;[r] — "As long as we are alive, so long it is possible that the vilest sins that are may be washed off by repentance." "Si vulneratus es, adhibe tibi curam dum vivis, dum spiras, etiam in ipso lecto positus, etiam si dici potes animam efflans, ut jam de hoc mundo exeas. Non impeditur temporis angustiâ misericordia

[q] Concil. Nicen. can. xiii. Concil. Agath. c. xi.
[r] Serm. 181. de Temp. c. xvi.

Dei. Quid enim est peccatum ad Dei misericordiam? tela araneæ, quæ, vento flante, nusquam comparet." So St. Chrysostom:[t] "If thou art wounded in thy soul, take care of it while thou livest, even so long as thou canst breathe, though thou beest now breathing thy last, yet take care still. The mercy of God cannot be hindered by time. For what is thy sin to God's mercy? even as a spider's web, when the wind blows, it is gone in an instant." Many more there are to the same purpose, who all speaking of the mightiness of the Divine mercy, do insinuate their meaning to be concerning a miraculous or extraordinary mercy. And therefore I shall oppose nothing against this; only say, that it is very sad when men put their hopes of being saved upon a miracle, and that without a miracle they must perish. But yet then to despair is entering into hell before their time, and even a course of the greatest imprudence in the world, next to that they are already guilty of, that is, a putting things to that extremity. "Dandum interstitium pœnitentiæ," said Tacitus. And, "Inter vitæ negotia et diem mortis oportere aliquid spatium intercedere," said Charles, the Emperor. — For, "nemo mortem venientem hilaris excepit, nisi qui se ad eam diu composuerat," said Senecca. — Repentance must have a space of time; and from the affairs of the world to rush into the arms of death, is too quick a change for him that would fain be saved. If he can, in the midst of all these disadvantages, it is well; but "he cannot with cheerfulness and joy receive his death, unless he bestowed much time and care in preparations against that sad solemnity."

Now concerning these instruments of hope, I am yet to give another account, lest this either seem to be an easiness and flattery of souls, and not warrantable from any revelation from God; or if it be, that it is also a perfect destruction of all the former doctrine. For if it be inquired thus: Hath God declared that death-bed penitents shall not be saved, or that they may be saved? or hath he said nothing at all of it? If he hath said they cannot be saved, why then do I bid them hope, and so abuse them with a false persuasion? If he hath said that they may be saved, why do I dispute against it, and make them fear, where God by a just promise hath given them reason to be confident, and hath obliged them to

[t] In Psalm. l. hom. 2.

believe they shall be saved? If he hath said nothing of it, why are not they to be comprehended within the general rules of all returning penitents? especially, since there was one case specially made for their interest, the example of the thief upon the cross? To this I shall give a clear and plain answer.

That God hath required such conditions of pardon, and that the duty of repentance is of such extent and burden, that it cannot be finished and performed by dying persons after a vicious life, is evident from all the former arguments: and therefore if we make dying men's accounts upon the stock of God's usual dealing, and open revelation, their case is desperate for the preceding reasons. But why then do I bid them hope, if their case be desperate? either God threatening death to all impenitent persons, means not to exact death of all, but of some only; or else when his Holy Spirit describes repentance in severe characters, he secretly means to take less than he says. For if it be such a work that cannot possibly be done on a death-bed, how then can dying persons be called upon to repent? for it is vain to repent, if it be impossible to hope; but if it be possible to do the work of repentance on our death-bed, but only that it is very difficult, there is in this affirmative no great matter: every one confesses that, and all evil men put it to the venture.

For the first part of the dilemma, I affirm nothing of it; God threatening death to all the impenitent, excepts none; "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Neither does God, exacting or describing repentance in several lines, use any respect of persons, but with the same measures he will deal with all. For when there is a difference in the Divine mercy, it is in giving time and grace to repent, not in sparing one and condemning another, who die equally criminal and impenitent. Those little lines of hopes are not upon either of these foundations. For whatsoever is known or revealed, is against these persons, and does certainly condemn them. Why, then, are they bidden to hope and repent? I answer once for all,—it is upon something that we know not. And if they be not saved we know not how, they cannot expect to be saved by any thing that is revealed in their particular. When St. Peter had declared to Simon Magus, that he was 'in the gall of bitterness;' and yet made him 'pray, if, peradventure, the thought of his heart might be forgiven

him:' he did not by any thing that was revealed know that he should be pardoned; but by something that he did not know, there might be hope. It is at no hand to be dissembled out of tenderness and pity to such persons, but to be affirmed openly; there is not revealed any thing to them that may bid them be in any degree confident. But he that hath a deadly wound, whom the chirurgeons affirm to be hopeless, yet is willing to receive cordials, and to be dressed.

II. If in the measures of life and death which are described in large characters, there be any lines so indefinite and comprehensive, that they who preach and declare the doctrines, do not fully take in all that God intends, upon the account of our weakness and ignorance, there may be some little rushes and twigs to support their sinking hopes. For although the matters of duty, and the conditions of life and death, are so plain and legible, that we can all understand our obligation, yet things are seldom so described, that we can give the final sentence concerning others. There is a secret in these things, which nothing shall open but the day of judgment. No man may judge his brother; that is, no man can or ought to say, this man is damned; and yet we know that he that dies an impenitent traitor, or rebel, or adulterer, is damned. But yet, that adulterous Natta, or the rebel Cinna, or the traitor Catiline, is actually damned, that we know not. The reason is, because our duty is described for us to guide and walk ourselves by, not to judge and sentence others. And even the judgment of the Church, who hath authority to judge and sentence, yet it is only for amendment; it is universal, it is declarative, it is conditional: not personal, final, decretory, and eternal. For otherwise does man judge, otherwise does God.

III. There is some variety in the case, and in the person, and in the degrees of repentance. There is a period beyond which God would not admit a man to pardon; but when it is, we know not. There is a 'minimum religionis,—the least measure of religion,' the lowest degree of acceptability; but what it is, we cannot tell. There is also a proper measure for every one, but no man can fathom it. And the duties and parts of repentance consist in the terms of a great distance and latitude; and we cannot tell when a man first begins to be safe, and when he is newly escaped from the regions of

sin, and when he begins his state of grace. Now as God abates great measures of his wrath, and forgives all that is past if we return betimes, and live twenty years in piety and repentance; so he does if the man do so nineteen years, and eighteen, and still shortening till you come to a year, or any the least time that can do the work of repentance, and exterminate his vicious habit. Now because Abraham begged for the pardon of Sodom, if there should be found fifty righteous there, and then abated five, and then five more, and then ten more, till he came to ten alone, and it is supposed that Abraham first gave out, and that God would have pardoned the city for one righteous man's sake, if Abraham had still persevered to ask: if any man will suppose that it may be done so in the abatements of time to be made to a returning sinner; though I say it is a strange diminution to come from years to one day, yet I will say nothing against it; but that length or shortness of time makes nothing to the mercies of God, but it makes very much to the duty of man, because every action requires some time, and every habit much more: now we have reason to say, that the condition of a dying penitent, after a whole wicked life, is desperate, because so far as we understand things, habits are not to be extinguished, and the contraries acquired, but with long time and study. But if there be any secret way by which the Spirit of God does work faster, and produce undiscerned miracles, we ought to adore that goodness by which it is so; and they that can believe this, may hope the other: in the meantime, neither the one nor the other is revealed: and so it stands as it did in the whole question.

IV. We find in the instance of Abraham's faith, that 'against hope he believed in hope;' that is, that he had great arguments on both sides, and therefore that in defiance of one, he would hope in the other, because this could not fail him, but the other could. If it can be brought to pass that a dying man can hope after a wicked life, it is a hope against hope; and of this all that I can say is, that it is no contradiction in the thing to affirm that a dying penitent, who hath contracted vicious habits, hath not time left him to perform that repentance, which God requires of habitual sinners under the pains of eternal death; and yet to bid such a person do what he can do, and pray, if peradventure God

will be entreated. Because that little hopes which he is bid to have, are not warranted, or relying upon pretence of any particular revelation, contrary to the so many expressions of severe duty and stricter conditions; but are placed upon the foundation of the Divine power, and such little proportions and similitudes of things, and guesses and conjectures of kind persons, as can only be sufficient to make the dying man try what can be done.

V. The first ages of the Church did exactly use this method of doctrine and discipline. In some cases (whereof I shall afterward give account) they refused to declare them pardoned, to minister God's pardon to dying penitents; but yet would not bid them despair, but refer them to the Divine judgment: which if it be reduced to the causes of things, if we believe they proceeded reasonably, must mean this, that they knew of no revelation concerning the pardon of such persons; but whether God would or no pardon them, they knew not, but bid them hope well. And when they did admit dying penitents to the peace of the Church, they did it 'de bene esse,' that it might do as much good as it could. But they knew not what that was, "Pœnitentiam dare possumus, securitatem dare non possumus." They are St. Austin's words. Now if I were to ask of him an account, it would be in the same way of objection as I am now untying. For did God promise pardon to dying penitents after a wicked life; or are there fearful threatenings in Scripture against such sinners, as certainly all in their case are? Or hath God said nothing at all concerning them? If God did promise pardon to such, then why did not the Church give security as well as penance? If God did threaten fearfully all such persons, why do they admit such to repentance, whom God will not admit to pardon, but hath threatened with eternal death? If he hath said nothing of them, they are to be judged by the measures of others; and truly that will too sadly ring their passing-bell. For men in health, who have contracted vicious habits, cannot be pardoned so long as their vicious habit remains; and they know that to overcome and mortify a vicious habit, is a work of time and great labour; and if this be the measure of dying penitents, as well as of living and healthful, they will sink in judgment that have not time to do their duty. But then why the Church of those ages, and particularly St. Austin, should

hope and despair at the same time for them, that is, knew no ground of revelations upon which to fix any hope of pardon for them, and yet should exhort them to repentance, which without hopes of pardon is to no purpose, there is no sensible account to be given but this, that for aught they knew, God might do more than they knew, and more than he had promised; but whether he would or not, they knew not, but by that means they thought they fairly quit their hands of such persons.

VI. But after all this strict survey of answers, if we be called to account for being so kind, it must be confessed that things are spoken out of charity and pity, more than of knowledge. The case of these men is sad and deplorable, and it is piety when things are come to that state and saddest event, to shew mercy by searching all the corners of revelation for comfort, that God may be as much glorified, and the dying men assisted as much, as may be. I remember the Jews are reproved by some for repeating the last verse but one in the Book of Isaiah, and setting it after the last of all. That being a verse of mercy, this of sorrow and threatening; as if they would be more merciful than God himself, and thought it unfit to end so excellent a book with so sad a cursing. Indeed God's ways are best, and his measures the surest; and therefore it is not good to promise where God hath not promised, and to be kind where he is angry, and to be free of his pardon where he hath shut up and sealed his treasures. But if they that say God hath threatened all such sinners as dying penitents after wicked life are, and yet that they must not despair, are to be reproved as too kind; then they much more, who confidently promise heaven at last. It is indeed a compliance with human misery, that makes it fit to speak what hopeful things we can; but if these hopes can easily be reproved, I am sure the former severity cannot so easily be confuted. That may, this cannot.

31. I. But now things being put into this constitution; the inquiry into what manner of repentance the dying penitent is obliged to, will be of no great difficulty. "Qui dicit omnia, nihil excipit;—He that is tied to all, can be excused from none." All that he can do is too little, if God shall deal with him according to the conditions of the Gospel which are described, and therefore he must not inquire into

measures, but do all, absolutely all, that he can in that sad period. Particularly,

32. II. Let him examine his conscience most curiously, according as his time will permit, and his other abilities; because he ought to be sure that his intentions are so real to God and to religion, that he hath already within him a resolution so strong, a repentance so holy, a sorrow so deep, a hope so pure, a charity so sublime, that no temptation, no time, no health, no interest, could, in any circumstance of things, ever tempt him from God and prevail.

33. III. Let him make a general confession of the sins of his whole life, with all the circumstances of aggravation; let him be mightily humbled, and hugely ashamed, and much in the accusation of himself, and bitterly lament his folly and misery; let him glorify God and justify him, confessing that if he perishes it is but just; if he does not, it is a glorious, an infinite mercy; a mercy not yet revealed, a mercy to be looked for in the day of wonders, the day of judgment. Let him accept his sickness and his death humbly at the hands of God, and meekly pray that God would accept that for punishment, and so consign his pardon for the rest through the blood of Jesus. Let him cry mightily unto God, incessantly begging for pardon, and then hope as much as he can, even so much as may exalt the excellence of the Divine mercy; but not too confidently, lest he presume above what is written.

34. IV. Let the dying penitent make what amends he can possibly, in the matter of real injuries and injustices that he is guilty of, though it be to the ruin of his estate; and that will go a great way in deprecation. Let him ask forgiveness, and offer forgiveness, make peace, transmit charity and provisions and piety to his relatives.

35. V. Next to these it were fitting that the dying penitent did use all the means he can to raise up his spirit, and do internal actions of religion with great fervour and excellence. To love God highly, to be ready to suffer whatsoever can come, to pour out his complaints with great passion and great humility; adding to these and the like, great effusions of charity, holy and prudent undertakings of severity and religion, in case he shall recover: and if he can, let him do some great thing, something that does in one little body of

action signify great affections; any heroical act, any transportation of a holy zeal, in his case does help to abbreviate the work of many years. If these things be thus done, it is all that can be done at that time, and as well as it can be then done; what the event of it will be, God only knows, and we all shall know at the day of judgment. In this case "the Church can give the sacrament, but cannot give security."[u]

Meditations and Prayers to be used in all the foregoing Cases.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye learn to do good, that are accustomed to do evil.[x]

This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures, from me (saith the Lord), because thou hast forgotten me.[y]

Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, lest while you look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.[z]

What wilt thou say, when he shall punish? shall not sorrow take thee as a woman in travail?[a]

And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore came these things upon me? for the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.[b]

I have seen thine adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms, and thine abominations. Wo unto thee! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be? saith the Lord.[c]

Thus saith the Lord unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them, he will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins.[d]

Then saith the Lord, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry, and when they offer an oblation, I will not accept them, but I will consume them by the sword, and by famine, and by the pestilence.[e]

Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou

[u] St. Aug. et habetur de Pœn. dist. 7. [x] Jer. xiii. 23. [y] Jer. xiii. 25.
[z] Jer. xiii. 16. [a] Verse 21. [b] Verse 22.
[c] Jer. xiii. 27. [d] Jer. xiv. 10. [e] Verses 11, 12.

take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.[f]

And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.[g]

Learn before thou speak, and use physic or ever thou be sick.[h]

Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy.[i]

Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance.[k]

Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vows in due time; and defer not until death, to be justified.[l]

I made haste, and prolonged not the time to keep thy commandments.[m]

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

Trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.

For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment;

If ye oppress not the stranger and the widow, then shall ye dwell in the land.[n]

Thus saith the Lord God, I will give you the land, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abominations thereof from thence.[o]

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.[p]

That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them, and they shall be my people and I will be their God.[q]

But as for them whose heart walketh after their detestable things, and their abominations; I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.[r]

They have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there

[f] Jer. xv. 19. [g] Verse 21. [h] Ecclus. xviii. 19.
[i] Ecclus. xviii. 20. [k] Verse 21. [l] Verse 22.
[m] Psalm cxix. [n] Jer. vii. [o] Ezek. xi. 18.
[p] Ezek. xi. 19. [q] Verse 20. [r] Verse 21.

was no peace, and one built up a wall, and others daubed it with untempered mortar.[s]

Will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying unto my people that hear your lies?[t]

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to your ways, saith the Lord God: repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.[u]

Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?[x]

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.[y]

Ye shall remember your ways, and all your doings wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.[z]

Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.[a]

Wo unto them that justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.[b]

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.[c]

Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes, cease to do evil.[d]

Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.[e]

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.[f]

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fruit of the land.[g]

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.[h]

She hath wearied herself with lies, therefore have I caused my fury to light upon her.[i]

[s] Ezek. xiii. 10. [t] Verse 19. [u] Ezek. xviii. 30. [x] Verse 31.
[y] Ezek. xviii. 32. [z] Ezek. xx. 43. [a] Isa. v. 18. [b] Verse 13.
[c] Isa. i. 15. [d] Verse 16. [e] Verse 17. [f] Verse 18.
[g] Verse 19. [h] Verse 20. [i] Ezek. xxiv.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.[k]

Turn thou unto thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.[l]

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.[m]

Return to the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away.[n]

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.[o]

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.[p]

For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.[q]

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.[r]

For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.[s]

I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comfort to him and his mouruers.[t]

I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.[u]

But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.[x]

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.[y]

[k] Hos. x. 12. [l] Hos. xii. 6. [m] Hos. xiii. 9. [n] Hos. i. 1.
[o] Isa. lv. 6. [p] Verse 7. [q] Isa. lvii. 15. [r] Verse 16.
[s] Isa. lvii. 17. [t] Verse 18. [u] Verse 19. [x] Verse 20.
[y] Verse 21.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.[z]

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.[a]

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depth of the sea.[b]

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.[c]

A Psalm.

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, have mercy upon us for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.

O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be a stranger to us, and as a wayfaring-man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?

Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against thee.

Do not abhor us for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not the covenant with us.[d]

I will no more sit in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoice; I will sit alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation.[e]

Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refused to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as waters that fail?[f]

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

[z] Lam. iii. 26, 27. [a] Micah, vii. 18. [b] Verse 19. [c] Eccles. xii. 1.
[d] Jer. xiv. 7-9. [e] Jer. xv. 17. [f] Verse 18.

O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.[g]

Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.[h]

Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled, mine heart is turned within me, for I have grievously rebelled.[i]

For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me.[k]

Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.[l]

O let me hear thy loving-kindness betimes, for in thee is my trust; shew thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Teach me the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God: let thy loving spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.

Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, and for thy righteousness' sake, bring my soul out of trouble.

The Lord upholdeth all such as fall, and lifteth up those that be down.[m]

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.

O do well unto thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.

O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen.

Glory be to the Father, &c.
As it was in the beginning, &c.

A Prayer for a Sinner returning after a long Impiety.

I.

O ETERNAL Judge of men and angels, Father of mercy, and the great Lover of souls; I humbly acknowledge that the state

[g] Jer. xvii. 13. [h] Verse 17. [i] Lam. i. 20.
[k] Lam. i. 15. [l] Psalm cxliii. [m] Psalm cxlii. 9.

of my soul is sad and deplorable, and by my fault, by my own grievous fault, I am in an evil condition; and if thou shouldest now enter into judgment with me, I have nothing to put in bar against the horrible sentence, nothing of my own, nothing that can ease thy anger, or abate the fury of one stroke of thy severe infliction. I do, O God, judge and condemn myself, and justify thee, for thou art righteous, and whatsoever thou doest is good and true. But, O my God, when the guilty condemns himself, nothing is left for the offended party but to return to graciousness and pardon. I, O Lord, have done thy severe and angry work, I have sentenced a vile man to a sad suffering; and if I so perish as I have deserved, thou art just and righteous, and thou oughtest for ever to be glorified.

II.

But, O my God, though I know that I have deserved evils that I know not, and hope I shall never feel, yet thou art gracious and holy, and lovest more to behold thy glory reflected from the floods and springs of mercy, than to see it refracted from the troubled waters of thy angry and severe displeasure: and because thou lovest it so highly to shew mercy, and because my eternal interest is served in it, I also ought to desire what thou lovest, and to beg of thee humbly and passionately that I may not perish; and to hope with a modest confidence that thou hast mercy in store for him, to whom thou hast given grace to ask for it: for it is one degree of pardon to be admitted to the station of penitent beggars; it is another degree of pardon that thou hast given me grace to hope, and I know that in the fountains of thy own graciousness thou hast infinite arguments and inducements to move thee to pity me, and to pardon.

III.

O my God, pity me for thy name's sake, even for thy own goodness' sake, and because I am miserable and need it. And because I have nothing of my own to be a ground of confidence, give thy servant leave to place my hopes on thee, through Jesus Christ; thou hast commanded me to come to the throne of grace with boldness, that I may find mercy in time of need; and thou hast promised to give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask him. O dear God, give me

pardon, and give me thy Spirit, and I am full and safe, and clothed and healed, and all that I desire to be, and all that I ought to be.

IV.

I have spent much time in vanity, and in undoing myself; grant me thy grace, that I may recover my loss, and employ all the remaining portion of my time in holy offices and duties of repentance. My understanding hath been abused by false persuasions and vain confidences. But now, O God, I offer up that imperious faculty, wholly to the obedience of Christ; to be governed by his laws, to be instructed by his doctrine, to be bended by all his arguments. My will hath been used to crookedness and peevish morosity, in all virtuous employments; but greedy and fierce, in the election and prosecution of evil actions and designs: but now, O God, I have no will but what is thine, and I will rather die than consent and choose any thing that I know displeases thee. My heart, O God, was a fountain of evil thoughts, ungracious words, and irregular actions, because my passions were not obedient nor orderly, neither temperate nor governed, neither of a fitting measure nor carried to a right object: but now, O God, I present them unto thee, not as a fit oblation, but as the lepers and the blind, the lame and the crooked, were brought unto the holy Jesus, to be made straight and clean, useful and illuminate; and when thou hast taken into thy possession what is thine, and what I stole from thee, or detained violently, and which the devil did usurp, then thou wilt sanctify and save it, use it as thine own, and make it to be so for ever.

V.

Blessed God, refuse not thy returning son: I have prodigally wasted my talents, and spent my time in riotous and vain living; but I have not lost my title and relation to thee, my Father. O my God, I have the sorrow of a humble penitent, the purposes of a converted sinner, the love of a pardoned person, the zeal of an obliged and redeemed prisoner, the hope of him that feels thy present goodness, and longs for more. Reject me not, O my God, but do thou work all my works within me. My heart is in thy hands, and I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps: but do thou guide me into the

way of righteousness; work in me an excellent repentance, a great caution and observance, a humble fear, a prudent and a religious hope, and a daily growing charity; 'work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure:' then shall I praise thy name, and love thy excellences, and obey thy commandments, and suffer thy impositions, and be what thou wouldest have me to be, that I, being rescued from the possession of the devil, and the torments of perishing souls, may be admitted to serve thee, and be a minister of thy honour, in the kingdoms of grace and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for an Old Person returning after a Wicked Life.

O ETERNAL God, give me leave to speak for myself before I die: I would fain live and be healed, I have been too long thine enemy, and would not be so for ever. My heart is broken within me, and all my fortunes are broken without; I know not how to speak, and I must not, I dare not hold my tongue.

II.

O my God, can yesterday be recalled, and the flying hours be stopped? In my youth I had not the prudence and caution of old age; but is it possible that, in my old age, I may be restored to the hopes and opportunities of youth? Thou didst make the sun to stand still at the prayer of Joshua, and return back at the importunity of Hezekiah. O do thou make a new account for me, and reckon not the days of my youth: but from this day reckon the beginnings of my life, and measure it by the steps of duty, and the light of the sun of righteousness now arising upon my heart.

III.

I am ashamed, O God, I am ashamed that I should betray my reason, shame my nature, dishonour all my strengths, debauch my understanding, and baffle all my faculties for so base, so vile affections, so unrewarding interests. O my God, where is all that vanity which I sucked so greedily, as the wild asses do the wind? Whither is that pleasure and madness gone, which so ravished all my senses, and made me deaf to the holy charms of thy divinest Spirit? Behold, O God, I die for that which is not; and unless thy mercy be

my rescue, for ever I shall suffer torments insufferable, still to come, still to succeed, for having drunk of unsatisfying, perishing waters, which had no current, no abode.

IV.

O dear God, smite me not yet; respite me one portion of time, I dare not say how much, but even as much as thou pleasest. O stay awhile, and try me but this once: it is true, O God, I have lost my strength, and given my vigorous years to that which I am ashamed to think on. But yet, O Lord, if thou pleasest, my soul can be as active, and dutiful, and affectionate, and humble, and sorrowful, and watchful, as ever. Thou dost not save any for his own worthiness, but eternal life is a gift; and thou canst, if thou pleasest, give it unto me. But why does my soul run thither, with all its loads of sin and shame upon it? That is too great yet to be thought of. O give me pardon, and give me sorrow, and give me a great, a mighty grace, to do the duty of a whole life in the remaining portion of my days.

V.

O my gracious Lord, whatever thy sentence be, yet let me have the honour to serve thee. Let me contribute something to thy glory, let me converse with thy saints and servants in the intercourses of piety; let me be admitted to be a servant to the meanest of thy servants, to do something that thou lovest. O God, my God, do what thou pleasest, so I may not for ever die in the sad and dishonourable impieties of the damned. Let me but be admitted to thy service in all the degrees of my soul, and all the days of my short life, and my soul shall have some comfort, because I signify my love and duty to thee, for whom I will not refuse to die. O my God, I will not beg of thee to give me comfort, but to give me duty and employment. Smite me, if thou pleasest, but smite me here; kill me, if thou pleasest, I have deserved it, but I would fain live to serve thee, and for no other reason, but that thou mayest love to pardon and to sanctify me.

VI.

O blessed Jesus, do thou intercede for me; thy Father hears thee in all things, and thou knowest our infirmities, and hath felt our miseries, and didst die to snatch us from the

intolerable flames of hell; and although thou givest thy gifts in differing proportions to thy servants, yet thou dost equally offer pardon to all thy enemies that will come unto thee and beg it. O give me all faith, and all charity, and a spirit highly compunctive, highly industrious, passionate, prudent, and indefatigable in holy services. Open thy fountains, gracious Lord, and bathe my stained soul in thy blood. Wash the Ethiop, cleanse the leper, dress the stranger's wounds, and forgive thy enemy.

VII.

I will not, O my God, I dare not, distrust those infinite glories of thy mercy and graciousness, by which thou art ready to save all the world. The sins of all mankind together are infinitely less than thy mercy, and thou who didst redeem the heathen world, wilt also, I hope, rescue me who am a Christian. This is my glory and my shame, my sins had not been so great if I had not disgraced so excellent a title, and abused so mighty a grace; but yet if the grace which I have abused had not been so great, my hopes had been less. One deep, O God, calls upon another. O let the abyss of thy mercy swallow up the puddles of my impurity; let my soul no longer sink in the dead sea of Sodom, but in the laver of thy blood and my tears and sorrow; wash me who come to thee to be cleansed and purified. It is not impossible to have it done, for thy power hath no limit: it is not unusual for thee to manifest such glories of an infinite mercy; thou dost it daily. O give me a fast, a tenacious hope on thee, and a bitter sorrow for my sins, and an excellent zeal of thy glory; and let my repentance be more exemplary than my sins, that the infiniteness of that mercy which shall save me, may be conspicuous to all saints and angels, and may endear the return of all sinners to thee, the fountain of holiness and mercy. Mercy, dear God, pity thy servant, and do thy work of grace speedily and mightily upon me, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ejaculations and short Prayers to be used by dying or sick Penitents after a wicked Life.

I.

O ALMIGHTY Father of men and angels, I have often been taught that thy mercies are infinite, and I know they are so;

and if I be a person capable of comfort, this is the fountain of it: for my sins are not infinite, only because they could not be so; my desires were only limited by my nature, for I would not obey the Spirit.

II.

Thou, O God, gavest mercy to the thief upon the cross, and from pain thou didst bring him to paradise, from sin to repentance, from shame to glory. Thou wert the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and art still slain in all the periods of it. O be thou pleased to adorn thy passion still with such miracles of mercy: and now in this sad conjunction of affairs, let me be made the instance.

III.

Thou art angry if I despair; and therefore thou commandest me to hope: my hope cannot rest upon myself, for I am a broken reed, and an undermined wall. But because it rests upon thee, it ought not to be weak, because thou art infinite in mercy and power.

IV.

He that hath lived best, needs mercy; and he that hath lived worst, even I, O Lord, am not wounded beyond the efficacy of thy blood, O dearest sweetest Saviour Jesus.

V.

I hope it is not too late to say this. But if I might be suffered to live longer, I would by thy grace live better, spending all my time in duty, laying out all my passion in love and sorrow, employing all my faculties in religion and holiness.

VI.

O my God, I am ready to promise any thing now, and I am ready to do or to suffer any thing, that may be the condition of mercy and pardon to me. But I hope I am not deceived by my fears, but that I should, if I might be tried, do all that I could, and love thee with a charity, great like that mercy by which I humbly pray that I may be pardoned.

VII.

My comfort, O God, is, that thou canst if thou wilt: and

I am sure thy mercy is as great as thy power, and why then may not I hope that thou wilt have mercy according to thy power? Man, only man, is the proper subject of thy mercy, and therefore, only he is capable of thy mercy, because he hath sinned against thee. Angels and the inferior creatures rejoice in thy goodness, but only we that are miserable and sinful can rejoice in thy mercy and forgiveness.

VIII.

I confess I have destroyed myself; but in thee is my help; for thou gettest glory to thy name by saving a sinner, by redeeming a captive slave, by enlightening a dark eye, by sanctifying a wicked heart, by pardoning innumerable and intolerable transgressions.

IX.

O my Father, chastise me if thou pleasest, but do not destroy me: I am a son, though an Absalom and a Cain, an unthankful, a malicious, a revengeful, uncharitable person; thou judgest not by time, but by the measures of the Spirit. The affections of the heart are not to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, nor repentance to be measured by time, but by the Spirit, and by the measures of thy mercy.

X.

O my God, hope is a word of an uncertain sound when it is placed in something that can fail: but thou art my hope and my confidence, and thy mercies are sure mercies which thou hast revealed to man in Christ Jesus, and they cannot fail them who are capable of them.

XI.

O gracious Father, I am as capable of mercy as I was of being created; and the first grace is always so free a grace, so undeserved on our part, that he that needs and calls is never forsaken by thee.

XII.

Blessed Jesus, give me leave to trust in thy promises, in the letter of thy promises; this letter killeth not, for it is the letter of thy Spirit, and saveth and maketh alive. Ask and you shall have; so thou hast said, O my God: they are thy own words; and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

XIII.

There are, O blessed Jesus, many more; and one tittle of thy word shall not pass away unaccomplished: and nothing could be in vain by which thou didst intend to support our hopes. If we confess our sins, thou art just and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquities.

XIV.

When David said he would confess, then thou forgavest him. When the prodigal was yet afar off, thou didst run out to meet him, and didst receive him. When he was naked, thou didst reinvest him with a precious robe; and what, O God, can demonstrate the greatness of thy mercy, but such a misery as mine, so great a shame, so great a sinfulness?

XV.

But what am I, O God, sinful dust and ashes, a miserable and undone man, that I should plead with the great Judge of all the world? Look not upon me as I am in myself, but through Jesus Christ behold thy servant; clothe me with the robes of his righteousness, wash me in his blood, conform me to his image, fill me with his Spirit, and give me time, or give me pardon and an excellent heroic spirit, that I may do all that can be done, something that is excellent, and that may be acceptable in Jesus Christ. If I perish, I perish; I have deserved it: but I will hope for mercy, till thy mercy hath a limit, till thy goodness can be numbered. O my God, let me not perish; thou hast no pleasure in my death, and it is impossible for man to suffer thy extremest wrath. Who can dwell with the everlasting burning? O my God, let me dwell safely in the embraces of thy sweetest mercy. Amen. Amen. Amen.

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

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